MODERN ENGLISH BOOKS OF POWER

GEORGE HAMLIN FITCH

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Charles Dickens Reading "The Chimes" at 58 Lincoln's Inn Fields on the Second of December, 1844. From a Sketch by Daniel Maclise, R. A.

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By GEORGE HAMLIN FITCH

"A Good Book Is the Precious
Life-Blood of a Master Spirit, Embalmed and Treasured
Up on Purpose to a Life Beyond Life."
Milton: Areopagitica

ILLUSTRATED

PAUL ELDER AND COMPANY
PUBLISHERS, SAN FRANCISCO

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The articles in this
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Sunday book-page of the San Francisco *Chronicle*.
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TO AMERIQUE
WHOSE
LOVE AND ENCOURAGEMENT
HELPED ME TO WRITE
THIS BOOK

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Introduction

My aim in this little book has been to give short sketches and estimates of the greatest modern English writers from Macaulay to Stevenson and Kipling. Omissions there are, but my effort has been to give the most characteristic writers a place and to try to stimulate the reader's interest in the man behind the book as well as in the best works of each author. Too much space is devoted in most literary criticism to the bare facts of biography and the details of essays or novels or histories written by authors. My plan has been to arouse interest both in the men and their books so that any reader of this volume may be stimulated to extend his knowledge of the modern English classics.

These chapters include the greatest English writers during the last one hundred and fifty years and they have been prepared mainly for those who have no thorough knowledge of modern English books or authors. They are of limited scope so that few quotations have been possible. But they have been written with an eager desire to help those who care to know the best works of modern English

authors. In the same spirit the most appropriate illustrations have been secured and a helpful bibliography has been added. If this book helps readers to secure one lasting friend among these authors it will have done good missionary work; for to make the books of one man or woman of genius a part of our mental possessions is to be set on the broad highway to literary culture.

The Vital Quality in Literature

To Get the Spiritual Essence of a Great Book One Must Study the Man Who Wrote It—The Man Is the Best Epitome of His Message.

IN this volume as in its predecessor, "Comfort Found in Good Old Books," my aim has been to enforce the theory that behind every great book is a man, greater than the best book that he ever wrote. This strong spiritual quality which every one of the great authors puts into his best books is what we should strive to secure when we read these great classics. Unless we get this spiritual part we miss the essence of the book.

Hence it has been my aim in this volume to make clear what manner of men wrote these books which serve as the landmarks of modern English literature.

The scope of this book is limited, but from Macaulay to Kipling the effort has been to

include those representative modern English authors who both in prose and verse best reflect the spiritual tendencies of their age. Whether essayists, historians, novelists or poets each of these writers has furnished something distinctive; each has caught some salient feature of his age and fixed it for all time in the amber of his thought.

And what a bead-roll is this of great English worthies: Macaulay, the most brilliant and learned of all English essayists; Scott, the finest story-teller of his own or any other age; Carlyle, the inspirer of ambitious youth; De Quincey, the greatest artist in style, whose words are as music to the sensitive ear; Dickens, the master painter of sorrows and joys of the common people; Thackeray, the best interpreter of human life and character; Charlotte Brontë, the brooding Celtic genius who laid bare the hearts of women; George Eliot, the greatest artist of her sex in mastery of human emotion; Ruskin, the first to teach the common people appreciation of art and architecture; Tennyson, the melodious singer who voiced the highest aspiration of his time; Browning, the greatest dramatic poet since Shakespeare; Charles Lamb, one of the tenderest of essayists; George Meredith, the most brilliant and suggestive novelist

of the Victorian age; Stevenson, the best beloved and most artistic story-teller of his day; Hardy, the master painter of tragedies of rural life; and Kipling, the interpreter of Anglo-Indian life, the singer of the new age of science and discovery, the laureate of the gospel of blood and iron.

The work of each of these men and women who make up the splendid roll of English immortals varies in quality, in style, in capacity to touch the heart and inspire the thought of the reader of to-day. But great as are their differences, all meet on the common ground of a warm-hearted, sympathetic humanity that knows no distinctions of race or creed, no limitations of time or place. The splendid sermons on the gospel of work that Carlyle preached after long wrestlings of the spirit are as full of inspiration to the youth of to-day as they were when they came out from the mind of the man who actually lived the laborious life that he commended; the little lay discourses that may be found scattered through Thackeray's novels and essays are born of agony of spirit, and it is their spiritual power which keeps them fresh and full of inspiration in this age of doubt and materialism.

And so we might go down through the whole list. Each of these great writers had

his Gethsemane, from which he emerged with the power of moving the hearts of men. So when we read that most beautiful essay of Lamb's on "Dream Children," our hearts ache for the lonely man who sacrificed the best things in life for the sake of the sister whom he loved better than his own happiness. And when we read Thackeray's eloquent words on family love we know that he wrote in his heart's blood, for the dearest woman in the world to him was lost forever in this world, when the light of her reason was clouded.

And so I have tried in these essays to show how bitter waters of sorrow have strengthened the spirit of all these masters of English thought and style, until they have poured out their hearts in eloquent words that can never die. Far across the gulf of years their sonorous voices reach our ears. Pregnant are they with the passionate earnestness of these men and women of genius, these bearers of the torch of spiritual inspiration passed from hand to hand down the centuries.

When our souls are moved by some great bereavement then the words of these inspired writers soothe our griefs. When we are beaten down in the dust of conflict they come with the refreshment of water from springs in the everlasting hills. When we are bitter over

great losses or sore over hope deferred or stricken because friends have proved faithless, then they soften our hearts and give us courage to take up once more the battle of life.

MODERN ENGLISH BOOKS OF POWER

Macaulay's Essays in European History

The Foremost Essayist in English Literature—His Style and Learning Have Made Macaulay a Favorite For Over a Half Century.

Macaulay belonged to the nineteenth century, as he was born in 1800, but in his cast of mind, in his literary tastes and in his intense partisanship he belonged to the century that includes Swift, Johnson and Goldsmith. He stands alone among famous English authors by reason of his prodigious memory, his wide reading, his oratorical style and his singular ascendancy over the minds of young students. The only writers of modern times who can be classed with him as great personal forces in the development of young minds are Carlyle and Emerson, and of the three Macaulay must be given first place because of a certain dynamic quality in the man

and his style which forces conviction on the mind of the immature reader. The same thing to a less extent is true of Carlyle, who suffers in his influence as one grows older. Emerson is in a class by himself. His appeal is that of pure reason and of high enthusiasm—an appeal that never loses its force with those who love the intellectual life.

Many famous men have testified to the mental stimulus which they received from Macaulay's essays. Upon these essays, contributed to the EDINBURGH REVIEW in its prime, Macaulay lavished all the resources of his vast scholarship, his discursive reading in the ancient and modern classics, his immense enthusiasm and his strong desire to prove his case. He was a great advocate before he was a great writer, and he never loses sight of the jury of his readers. He blackens the shadows and heightens the lights in order to make heroes out of Clive and Warren Hastings; he hammers Boswell and Boswell's editor, Croker, over the sacred head of old Dr. Johnson; he lampoons every eminent Tory, as he idealizes every prominent Whig in English political history. Macaulay's style is declamatory; he wrote as though he were

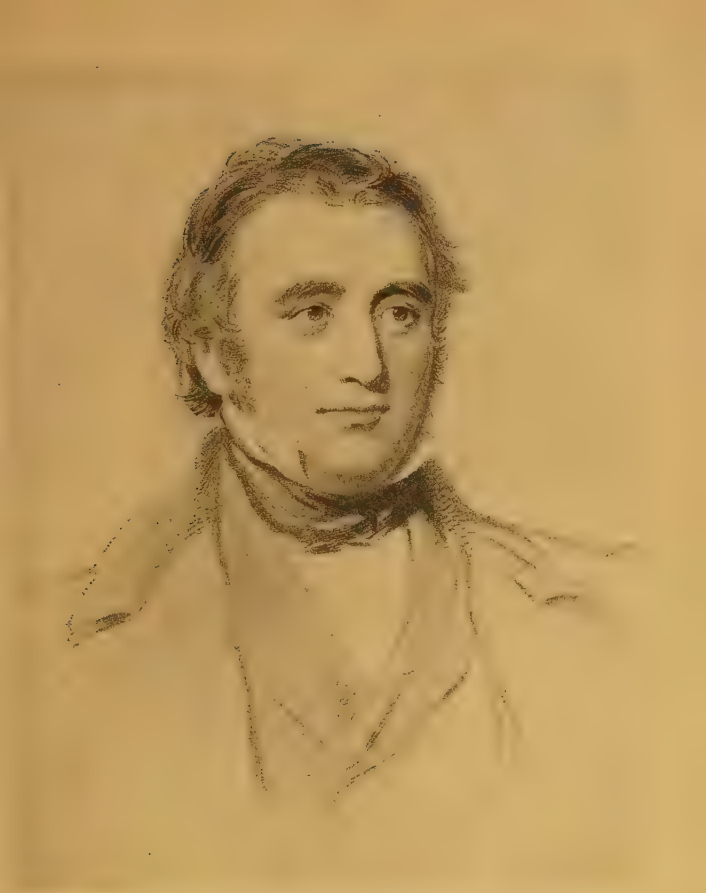
to deliver his essays from the rostrum; he abounds in antithesis; he works up your interest in the course of a long paragraph until he reaches his smashing climax, in which he fixes indelibly in your mind the impression which he desires to create. It is all like a great piece of legerdemain; your eyes cannot follow the processes, but your mind is amazed and then convinced by the triumphant proof of the conjuror's skill.

Macaulay had one of the most successful of lives. His early advantages were ample. He had a memory which made everything he read his own, ready to be drawn upon at a moment's notice. He was famous as an author at the early age of twenty-five; he was already a distinguished Parliamentary orator at thirty; at thirty-three he had gained a place in the East Indian Council. He never married, but he had an ideal domestic life in the home of his sister, and one of his nephews, George Otto Trevelyan, wrote his biography, one of the best in the language, which reveals the sweetness of nature that lay under the hard surface of Macaulay's character. He made a fortune out of his books, and in ten years' service in India he gained another fortune,

with the leisure for wide reading, which he utilized in writing his history of England. He died at the height of his fame, before his great mental powers had shown any sign of decay. Take it all in all, his was a happy life, brimful of work and enjoyment.

Thomas Babington Macaulay was born October 25, 1800, the son of a wealthy merchant who was active in securing the abolition of the slave trade. His precocity is almost beyond belief. He read at three years of age, gave signs of his marvelous memory at four, and when only eight years old wrote a theological discourse. He entered Trinity College, Cambridge, at eighteen, but his aversion to mathematics cost him college honors. He showed at Cambridge great fondness for Latin declamation and for poetry. At twenty-four he became a fellow of Trinity. He studied law, but did not practice. Literature and politics absorbed his attention. At twenty-five he made his first hit with his essay on Milton in the EDINBURGH REVIEW.

This was followed in rapid succession by the series of essays on which his fame mainly rests. In 1830 he was elected to Parliament, and in the following year he established his reputation as an orator by



Thomas Babington Macaulay
at the Age of Forty-nine—After an Engraving
by W. Holl, from a Drawing by
George Richmond, A. R. A.

a great speech on the reform bill. But financial reverses came when he lost the lucrative post of Commissioner in Bankruptcy and his fellowship at Trinity lapsed. To gain an income he accepted the position of secretary of the Board of Control of Indian Affairs, and soon after was offered a seat in the Supreme Council of India at Calcutta at $50,000 a year. He lived in India four years, and it was mainly in these years that he did the reading which afterward bore fruit in his *History of England*.

At thirty-nine Macaulay began his *History of England*, which continued to absorb most of his time for the next twenty years. While he was working on his history he published *Lays of Ancient Rome*, that had a success scarcely inferior to that of Scott's *Lady of the Lake* or Byron's *Childe Harold*. He also published his essays, which had a remarkable sale. His history, the first two volumes of which appeared in 1848, scored a success that astounded all the critics. When the third volume appeared in 1855, no less than twenty-six thousand, five hundred copies were sold in ten weeks, which broke all records of that day. Macaulay received royalties of over $150,000 on history, a sum which would have been

trebled had he secured payment on editions issued in the United States, where his works were more popular than in his own country. His last years were crowded with honors. He accepted a peerage two years before his death. When the end came he was given a public funeral and a place in Westminster Abbey.

With Carlyle, Macaulay shares the honor of being the greatest of English essayists. While he cannot compare with Carlyle in insight into character and in splendor of imagination, he appeals to the wider audience because of his attractive style, his wealth of ornament and illustration and his great clearness. Carlyle's appeal is mainly to students, but Macaulay appeals to all classes of readers.

Macaulay's style has been imitated by many hands, but no one has ever worked such miracles as he wrought with apparent ease. In the first place, his learning was so much a part of his mind that he drew on its stores without effort. Scarcely a paragraph can be found in all his essays which is not packed with allusions, yet all seem to illustrate his subject so naturally that one never looks upon them as used to display his remarkable knowledge.

Macaulay is a master of all the literary arts. Especially does he love to use antithesis and to make his effects by violent contrasts. Add to this the art of skilful climax, clever alliteration, happy illustration and great narrative power and you have the chief features of Macaulay's style. The reader is carried along on this flood of oratorical style, and so great is the author's descriptive power that one actually beholds the scenes and the personages which he depicts.

Of all his essays Macaulay shows his great powers most conspicuously in those on Milton, Clive, Warren Hastings and Croker's edition of Boswell's Johnson. In these he is always the advocate laboring to convince his hearers; always the orator filled with that passion of enthusiasm which makes one accept his words for the time, just as one's mind is unconsciously swayed by the voice of an eloquent speaker. It is this intense earnestness, this fierce desire to convince, joined to this prodigal display of learning, which stamps Macaulay's words on the brain of the receptive reader. Only when in cold blood we analyze his essays do we escape from this literary hypnotism which he exerts upon every reader.

The essays of Macaulay are full of meat and all are worth reading, but, of course, every reader will differ in his estimate of them according to his own tastes and sympathies. It is fine practice to take one of these essays and look up the literary and historical allusions. No more attractive work than this can be set before a reading club. It will give rich returns in knowledge as well as in methods of literary study. Macaulay's *History* is not read to-day as it was twenty years ago, mainly because historical writing in these days has suffered a great change, due to the growth of religious and political toleration. Macaulay is a partisan and a bigot, but if one can discount much of his bias and bitterness it will be found profitable to read portions of this history. Macaulay's verse is not of a high order, but his *Lays* are full of poetic fire, and they appeal to a wider audience than more finished verse.

Of all the English writers of the last century Macaulay has preserved the strongest hold on the reading public, and whatever changes time may make in literary fashions, one may rest assured that Macaulay will always retain his grip on readers of English blood.

Scott and His Waverley Novels

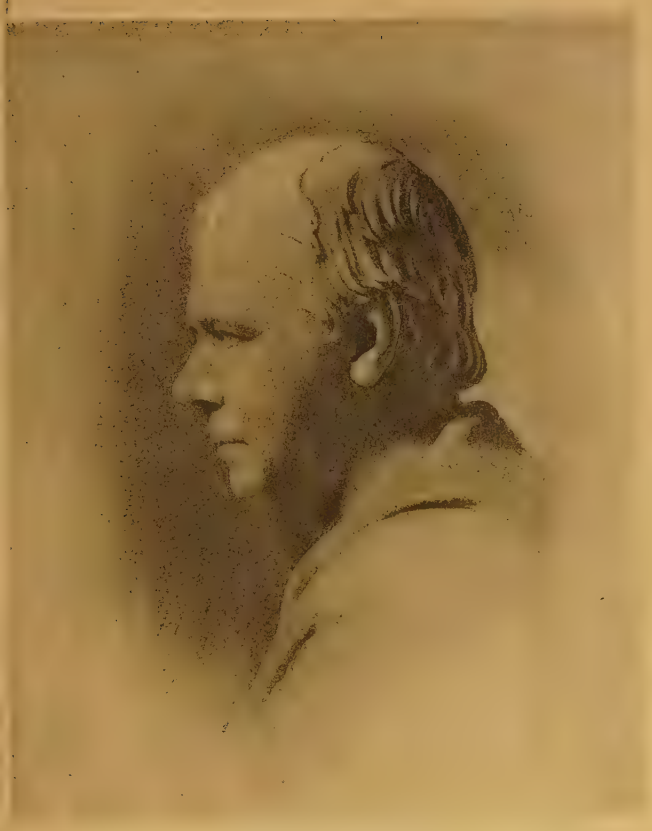
The Greatest Novelist the World Has Known—He Made History Real and Created Characters That Will Never Die.

It is as difficult to sum up in a brief article the work and the influence of Sir Walter Scott as it is to make an estimate of Shakespeare, for Scott holds the same position in English prose fiction that Shakespeare holds in English poetry. In neither department is there any rival. In sheer creative force Scott stands head and shoulders above every other English novelist, and he has no superior among the novelists of any other nation. He has made Scotland and the Scotch people known to the world as Cervantes made Spain and the Spaniards a reality for all times.

But he did more than Cervantes, for his creative mind reached over the border into

England and across the channel to France and Germany, and even to the Holy Land, and found there historical types which he made as real and as immortal as his own highland clansmen. His was the great creative brain of the nineteenth century, and his work has made the world his debtor. His work stimulated the best story teller of France and gave the world *Monte Cristo* and *The Three Guardsmen.* It fired the imaginations of a score of English historical novelists; it was the progenitor of Weyman's *A Soldier of France* and Conan Doyle's *Micah Clarke* and *The White Company.*

Scott's mind was Shakespearean in its capacity for creating characters of real flesh and blood; for making great historical personages as real and vital as our next-door neighbors, and for bursts of sustained story telling that carry the reader on for scores of pages without an instant's drop in interest. Only the supreme masters in creative art can accomplish these things. And the wonder of it is that Scott did all these things without effort and without any self-consciousness. We can not imagine Scott bragging about any of his books or his characters, as Balzac did about Eugenie



Sir Walter Scott
This Portrait is Taken from Chantrey's Bust now at Abbotsford, which, According to Lockhart, "Alone Preserves for Posterity the Expression most fondly Remembered by All who Ever Mingled in his Domestic Circle"

Grandet and others of his French types. He was too big a man for any small vanities. But he was as human as Shakespeare in his love of money, his desire to gather his friends about him and his hearty enjoyment of good food and drink.

It has become the fashion among some of our hair-splitting critics to decry Scott because of his carelessness in literary style, his tendency to long introductions, and his fondness for description. These critics will tell you that Turgeneff and Tolstoi are greater literary artists than Scott, just as they tell you that Thackeray and Dickens do not deserve a place among the foremost of English novelists. This petty, finical criticism, which would measure everything by its own rigid rule of literary art, loses sight of the great primal fact that Scott created more real characters and told more good stories than any other novelist, and that his work will outlive that of all his detractors. It ignores the fact that Thackeray's wit, pathos, tenderness and knowledge of human nature make him immortal in spite of many defects. It forgets that Dickens' humor, joy of living and keen desire to help his fellow man will bring him thousands of readers after all the

apostles of realism are buried under the dust of oblivion.

Scott had the ideal training for a great historical novelist. Yet his literary successes in verse and prose were the result of accident. It is needless here to review his life. The son of a mediocre Scotch lawyer, he inherited from his father his capacity for work and his passion for system and order. From his mother he drew his love of reading and his fondness for old tales of the Scotch border. Like so many famous writers, his early education was desultory, but he had the free run of a fine library, and when he was a mere schoolboy his reading of the best English classics had been wider and more thorough than that of his teachers.

Forced by boyish illness to live in the country, he early developed a great love for the Scotch ballads and the tales of the romantic past of his native land. These he gathered mainly by word of mouth. Later he was a diligent student and collector of all the old ballads. In this way his mind was steeped in historical lore, while by many walking tours through the highlands he came to know the common people as very few have ever known them.

White Horse Inn
From an
Illustration to
"Waverley"
Drawn by
G. Cattermole
and Engraved by
E. Finden

Thus for forty years, while he was a working lawyer and a sheriff of his county, he was really laying up stores of material upon which he drew for his many novels. His literary tastes were first developed by study of German and by the translation of German ballads and plays. This practice led him to write *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and its success was responsible for *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake*. But great as was his triumph in verse, he dropped the writing of poems when Byron's work eclipsed his own.

Then, in his forty-third year, he turned to prose and began with *Waverley;* that series of novels which is the greatest ever produced by one man. The success of his first story proved a great stimulus to his imagination, and for years he continued to produce these novels, three of which may be ranked as the best in English literature. The element of mystery in regard to the authorship added to Scott's literary success. It was his habit to crowd his literary work into the early hours from four to eight o'clock in the morning; the remainder of the day was given up to legal duties and the evening to society. His tremendous energy and his power of concentra-

tion made these four hours equal to an ordinary man's working day. His mind was so full of material that the labor was mainly that of selection. Creative work, when once seated at his desk, was as natural as breathing. Scott came to his desk with the zest of a boy starting on a holiday, and this pleasure is reflected in the ease and spontaneity of his stories.

But much as he liked his literary work, Scott would not have produced so great a number of fine novels had he not been impelled by the desire to retrieve large money losses. His old school friend, Ballantyne, forced into bankruptcy the printing firm in which Scott was a secret partner. The novelist was not morally responsible for these debts, but his keen sense of honor made him accept all the responsibility, and it drove him to that unceasing work which shortened his life. He paid off nearly all the great debt, and he gave in this task an example of high courage and power of work that has never been surpassed and seldom equaled. You may read the record of those last years in Lockhart's fine *Life of Scott*. Get the one volume edition, for the full work is too long for these busy days, and follow the

old author in his heroic struggle. It will bring tears to your eyes, but it will make you a lover of Scott, the man, who was as great as Scott, the poet and novelist.

Ruskin, when he was making up a list of great authors, put opposite Scott's name, "Every line." That bit of advice cannot be followed in these strenuous times, but one must make a selection of the best, and then, if he have time and inclination, add to this number. To my mind, the four great novels of Scott are *Ivanhoe*, *Quentin Durward*, *The Talisman* and *The Heart of Midlothian*. The first gives you feudal England as no one else has painted it, with a picture of Richard the Lion-Hearted which no historian has ever approached. It contains some of the most thrilling scenes in all fiction.

James Payn, who was a very clever novelist, relates the story that he and two literary friends agreed to name the scene in all fiction that they regarded as the most dramatic. When they came to compare notes they found that all three had chosen the same—the entry of the unknown knight at Ashby de la Zouch, who passes by the tents of the other contestants and strikes with a resounding clash the shield

of the haughty Templar. This romance also contains one of Scott's finest women, the Jewess Rebecca, who atones for the novelist's many insipid female characters. Scott was much like Stevenson—he preferred to draw men, and he was happiest when in the clash of arms or about to undertake a desperate adventure.

Quentin Durward is memorable for its splendid picture of Louis XI, one of the ablest as well as one of the meanest men who ever sat on a throne. The early chapters of this novel, which describe the adventures of the young Scotch soldier at the court of France, have never been surpassed in romantic interest. *The Talisman* gives the glory and the romance of the Crusades as no other imaginative work has done. It stands in a class by itself and is only approached by Scott's last novel, *Count Robert of Paris*, which gives flashes of the same spirit.

Of the Scotch novels it is difficult to make a choice, but it seems to me *The Heart of Midlothian* has the widest appeal, although many would cast their votes for *Old Mortality*, *The Antiquary* or *Rob Roy* because of the rich humor of those romances. Scott's dialect, although true to nature, is

not difficult, as he did not consider it necessary to give all the colloquial terms, like the modern "kailyard" writers.

If you read three or four of Scott's novels you are pretty apt to read more. It is an easy matter to skip the prolix passages and the unnecessary introductions. This done, you have a body of romance that is far richer than any present-day fiction. And their great merit is that, though written in a coarse age, the *Waverley* novels are sweet and wholesome. One misses a great source of enjoyment and culture who fails to read the best of Scott's novels. Take them all in all, they are the finest fiction that has ever been written, and their continued popularity, despite their many faults, is the best proof of their sterling merit.

Carlyle As an Inspirer of Youth

The Finest English Prose Writer of The Last Century—His Best Books, "Past and Present," "Sartor Resartus" and the "French Revolution."

As an influence in stimulating school and college students, Macaulay must be given a foremost place, but greater than Macaulay, because of his spiritual fervor and his moral force, stands Thomas Carlyle, the great prophet and preacher of the nineteenth century, whose influence will outlast that of all other writers of his time. And this spiritual potency, which resides in his best work, is not weakened by his love of the Strong Man in History or his fear of the rising tide of popular democracy, in which he saw a dreadful repetition of the horrors of the French Revolution. It was the Puritan element in his granite character

Thomas Carlyle
From the World-Famed Masterpiece of
Portraiture by James McNeill
Whistler

which gave most of the flaming spiritual ardor to Carlyle's work. It was this which made him the greatest preacher of his day, although he had left behind him all the old articles of faith for which his forefathers went cheerfully to death on many a bloody field.

Carlyle believed a strong religious faith was vital to any real and lasting work in this world, and from the day he gave out *Sartor Resartus* he preached this doctrine in all his books. He was born into a generation that was content to accept the forms of religion, so long as it could enjoy the good things of this world, and much of Carlyle's speech sounded to the people of his day like the warnings of the prophet Isaiah to the Israelites of old. But Carlyle was never daunted by lack of appreciation or by any ridicule or abuse. These only made him more confident in his belief that the spiritual life is the greatest thing in this world. And he actually lived the life that he preached.

For years Carlyle failed to make enough to support himself and his wife, yet he refused a large income, offered by the London Times for editorial work, on the ground that he could not write to order nor bend

his opinions to those of others. He put behind him the temptation to take advantage of great fame when it suddenly came to him. When publishers were eager for his work he spent the same time in preparing his books as when he was poor and unsought. He labored at the smallest task to give the best that was in him; he wrote much of his work in his heart's blood. Hence it is that through all of his books, but especially through *Past and Present* and *Heroes and Hero Worship*, one feels the strong beat of the heart of this great man, who yearned to make others follow the spiritual life that he had found so full of strength and comfort.

Carlyle's life was largely one of work and self-denial. He was born of poor parents at the little village of Ecclefechan, in Dumfriesshire, Scotland. His father, though an uneducated stone-mason, was a man of great mental force and originality, while his mother was a woman of fine imagination, with a large gift of story telling. The boy received the groundwork of a good education and then walked eighty miles to Edinburgh University. Born in 1795, Carlyle went to Edinburgh in 1809. His painful economy at college laid the

foundation of the dyspepsia which troubled him all his days, hampered his work and made him take a gloomy view of life. At Edinburgh he made a specialty of mathematics and German. He remained at the university five years.

The next fifteen years were spent in tutoring, hack writing for the publishers and translation from the German. His first remunerative work was the translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, a version which still remains the best in English. After his marriage to Jane Welsh he was driven by poverty to take refuge on his wife's lonely farm at Craigenputtock, where he did much reading and wrote the early essays which contain some of his best work. The EDINBURGH REVIEW and FRASER'S were opened to him.

Finally, in 1833, when he was nearly forty years old, he made his first literary hit with *Sartor Resartus*, which called out a storm of caustic criticism. The Germanic style, the elephantine humor, the strange conceits and the sledge-hammer blows at all which the smug English public regarded with reverence—all these features aroused irritation. Four years later came *The French Revolution*, which established Carlyle's fame

as one of the greatest of English writers. From this time on he was freed from the fear of poverty, but it was only in his last years, when he needed little, that he enjoyed an income worthy of his labors.

Carlyle's great books, beside those I have mentioned, are the lives of *Cromwell* and of *Frederick the Great*. These are too long for general reading, but a single volume condensation of the *Frederick* gives a good idea of Carlyle's method of combining biography and history. Carlyle outlived all his contemporaries—a lonely old man, full of bitter remorse over imaginary neglect of his wife, and full also of despair over the democratic tendencies of the age, which he regarded as the outward signs of national degeneracy.

Carlyle's fame was clouded thirty years ago by the unwise publication of reminiscences and letters which he never intended for print. Froude was chosen as his biographer. One of the great masters of English, Froude was a bachelor who idealized Mrs. Carlyle and who regarded as the simple truth an old man's bitter regrets over opportunities neglected to make his wife happier. Everyone who has studied Carlyle's life knows that he was dogmatic,

dyspeptic, irritable, and given to sharp speech even against those he loved the best. But over against these failings must be placed his tenderness, his unfaltering affection, his self-denial, his tremendous labors, his small rewards.

When separated from his wife Carlyle wrote her letters that are like those of a young lover, an infinite tenderness in every line. One of her great crosses was the belief that her husband was in love with the brilliant Lady Ashburton. Her jealousy was absurd, as this great lady invited Carlyle to her dinners because he was the most brilliant talker in all England, and he accepted because the opportunity to indulge in monologue to appreciative hearers was a keener pleasure to him than to write eloquent warnings to his day and generation. Froude's unhappy book, with a small library of commentary that it called forth, is practically forgotten, but Carlyle's fame and his books endure because they are real and not founded on illusion.

Carlyle opens a new world to the college student or the ambitious youth who may be gaining an education by his own efforts. He sounds a note that is found in no other author of our time. Doubtless

some of this attraction is due to his singular style, formed on a long study of the German, but most of it is due to the tremendous earnestness of the man, which lays hold of the young reader. Never shall I forget when in college preparatory days I devoured *Past and Present* and was stirred to extra effort by its trumpet calls that work is worship and that the night soon cometh when no man can work.

His fine chapter on *Labor*, with its splendid version of the *Mason's Song* of Goethe has stimulated thousands to take up heavy burdens and go on with the struggle for that culture of the mind and the soul which is the more precious the harder the fight to secure it. I remember copying in a commonplace book some of Carlyle's sonorous passages that stir the blood of the young like a bugle call to arms. Reading them over years after, I am glad to say that they still appealed to me, for it seems to me that the saddest thing in this world is to lose one's youthful enthusiasms. When you can keep these fresh and strong, after years of contact with a selfish world, age cannot touch you.

In this appeal to all that is best and noblest in youth, Carlyle stands unrivaled.

* Room where I was born; to the middle of that Arch was my Father's House, Village of Ecclefechan, 4 Dec 1795. – T. Carlyle (Chelsea, 5 January, 1871)

ARCHHOUSE, ECCLEFECHAN, DUMFRIESSHIRE
THE BIRTHPLACE OF THOMAS CARLYLE—FROM A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE POSSESSION OF ALEXANDER CARLYLE, M.A. ON WHICH CARLYLE HAS WRITTEN A MEMORANDUM TO SHOW IN WHICH ROOM HE WAS BORN

He has far more heart, force and real warm blood than Emerson, who saw just as clearly, but who could not make his thought reach the reader. A course in Carlyle should be compulsory in the freshman year at every college. If the lecturer were a man still full of his early enthusiasms it could not fail to have rich results. Take, for instance, those two chapters in *Past and Present* that are entitled "Happy" and "Labor." In a dozen pages are summed up all Carlyle's creed. In these pages he declares that the only enduring happiness is found in good, honest work, done with all a man's heart and soul. And after caustic words on the modern craving for happiness he ends a noble diatribe with these words, which are worth framing and hanging on the wall, where they may be studied day by day:

> Brief brawling Day, with its noisy phantasms, its poor paper-crown's tinsel-gilt, is gone; and divine everlasting Night, with her star-diadems, with her silences and her veracities, is come! What hast thou done, and how? Happiness, unhappiness; all that was but wages thou hadst; thou hast spent all that, in sustaining thyself hitherward; not a coin of it remains with thee; it is all spent, eaten; and now thy work, where is thy work? Swift, out with it; let us see thy work!

Sartor Resartus is very hard reading, but if you make up your mind to go through it you will be repaid by many fine thoughts and many noble passages of impassioned prose. Under the guise of Herr Diogenes Teufelsdrockh, Carlyle tells the story of his early religious doubts, his painful struggles that recall Bunyan's wrestlings with despair, and his final entry upon a new spiritual life. He wrote to let others know how he had emerged from the Valley of the Shadow of Pessimism into the delectable Mountains of Faith. Carlyle was the first of his day to proclaim the great truth that the spiritual life is far more important than the material life, and this he showed by the humorous philosophy of clothes, which he unfolded in the style of the German pedants. Carlyle evidently took great pleasure in developing this satire on German philosophy, which is full of broad humor.

The French Revolution has been aptly called "history by lightning flashes." One needs to have a good general idea of the period before reading Carlyle's work. Then he can enjoy this series of splendid pictures of the upheaval of the nether world and the strange moral monsters that sated their

lust for blood and power in those evil days, which witnessed the terrible payment of debts of selfish monarchy. Carlyle reaches the height of his power in this book, which may be read many times with profit.

The sources of Carlyle's strength as a writer are his moral and spiritual fervor and his power of making the reader see what he sees. The first insures him enduring fame, as it makes what he wrote eighty years ago as fresh and as full of fine stimulus as though it were written yesterday. The other faculty was born in him. He had an eye for pictures; he described what he saw down to the minutest detail; he made the men of the French Revolution as real as the people he met on his tour of Ireland. He made Cromwell and Frederick men of blood and iron, not mere historical lay figures. And over all he cast the glamour of his own indomitable spirit, which makes life look good even to the man who feels the pinch of poverty and whose outlook is dreary. You can't keep down the boy who makes Carlyle his daily companion; he will rise by very force of fighting spirit of this dour old Scotchman.

De Quincey As a Master of Style

He Wrote "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater"—Dreamed Dreams and Saw Visions and Pictured Them in Poetic Prose.

Of all the English writers Thomas De Quincey must be given the palm for rhythmical prose. He is as stately as Milton, with more than Milton's command of rhythm. If you read aloud his best passages, which are written in what he calls his bravura style, you have a near approach to the music of the organ. De Quincey was so nice a judge of words, he knew so well how to balance his periods, that one of his sentences gives to the appreciative ear the same delight as a stanza of perfect verse.

Ruskin had much of De Quincey's command of impassioned prose, but he never rose to the same sustained heights as the

Thomas De Quincey
From an Old Engraving

older author. In fact, De Quincey stands alone in these traits: the mass and accuracy of his accumulated knowledge; the power of making the finest distinctions clear to any reader, and the gorgeous style, thick with the embroidery of poetical figures, yet never giving the impression of over-adornment. And above all these merits is the supreme charm of melodious, rhythmical sentences, which give the same enjoyment as fine music.

Forty years ago De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* was read by everyone who professed any knowledge of the masters of English literature. To-day it is voted old-fashioned, and few are familiar with its splendid imagery. His other works, which fill over a dozen volumes, are practically forgotten, mainly because his style is very diffuse and his constant digressions weary the reader who has small leisure for books.

No one, however, should miss reading the *Confessions*, the *Autobiography* and some one essay, such, for instance, as "Murder as One of the Fine Arts," or "The Flight of a Tartar Tribe," or "The Vision of Sudden Death" in *An English Mail Coach*. All these contain passages of the greatest beauty

buried in prolix descriptions. The reader must be warned not to drop De Quincey because of his digressions. With a little practice you may skip those which do not appeal to you, and there is ample sweetness at the heart of his work to repay one for removing a large amount of husk.

De Quincey has always impressed me as a fine example of the defects of the English school and college training. Although he could write and speak Greek fluently at thirteen, and although he had equally perfect command of Latin and German, he was absolutely untrained in the use of his knowledge and he knew no more about real life when he came out of college than the average American boy of ten. With a splendid scholarly equipment at seventeen, when thrown upon his own resources in London, he came to the verge of starvation, and laid the seeds of disease of the stomach, which afterward drove him to the use of opium.

All his training was purely theoretical; in the practical affairs of life he remained to the day of his death a mere child. As he says in his *Confessions*, he could have earned a good living as a corrector of Greek proofs in any big London pub-

lishing house, but it never occurred to his schoolboy mind that his mastery of this difficult classical language was of any practical value. In our day De Quincey would have been the greatest magazinist of the age, because his best work was in the short essay; but it is to be feared that the publishers of his time fattened on the good things which he produced and gave small sums to the man who turned out these masterpieces with so little effort.

De Quincey was born in 1785 and died in 1859. His life was peculiar and its facts became very well known even in his own time because in his *Autobiography* and his *Confessions* he disclosed its details with the frankness of a child. These works are surcharged with some exaggeration, but in the main they ring true. As precocious as Macaulay, he had much of that author's fondness for books, and when he first went to public school at eleven years of age he had read as much as most men when they take a college degree. His mind absorbed languages without effort. At fifteen he could write Greek verse, and his tutor once remarked, "That boy could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English one."

He lost his father at the age of seven, and his mother seems to have given little personal attention to him. He was in nominal charge of four guardians, and at seventeen, when his health had been seriously reduced by lack of exercise and overdosing of medicines, the sensitive boy ran away from the Manchester Grammar school and wandered for several months in Wales. He was allowed a pound a week by one of his guardians, and he made shift with this for months; but finally the hunger for books, which he had no money to buy, sent him to London. There he undertook to get advances from money-lenders on his expectations. This would have been easy, as he was left a substantial income in his father's will, but these Shylocks kept the boy waiting.

In his *Confessions* he tells of his sufferings from want of food, of his nights in an unfurnished house in Soho with a little girl who was the "slavey" of a disreputable lawyer, of his wanderings in the streets, of the saving of his life by an outcast woman whom he has immortalized in the most eloquent passages of the book. Finally, he was restored to his friends and went to Oxford. His mental independence prevented him

De Quincey with Two Daughters
and Grandchild—From a Chalk Drawing
by James Archer, R. S. A.
made in 1855.

from taking a degree, and chronic neuralgia of the face and teeth led him to form the habit of taking opium, which clung to him for life.

De Quincey was a close associate of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Lamb and others. He was a brilliant talker, especially when stimulated with opium, but he was incapable of sustained intellectual work. Hence all his essays and other work first appeared in periodicals and were then published in book form. It is noteworthy that an American publisher was the first to gather his essays in book form, and that his first appreciation, like that of Carlyle, came from this country.

Much of De Quincey's work is now unreadable because it deals with political economy and allied subjects, in which he fancied he was an expert. He is a master only when he deals with pure literature, but he has a large vein of satiric humor that found its best expression in the grotesque irony of "Murder as One of the Fine Arts." In this essay he descants on the greatest crime as though it were an accomplishment, and his freakish wit makes this paper as enjoyable as Charles Lamb's essay on the origin of roast pig.

De Quincey's fame, however, rests upon *The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. This is a record unique in English literature. It tells in De Quincey's usual style, with many tedious digressions, the story of his neglected boyhood, his revolt at school discipline and monotony that had shattered his health, his wanderings in Wales, his life as a common vagrant in London, his college life, his introduction to opium and the dreams that came with indulgence in the drug. The gorgeous beauty of De Quincey's pictures of these opium visions has probably induced many susceptible readers to make a trial of the drug, with deep disappointment as the result. No common mind can hope to have such visions as De Quincey records.

His imagination has well been called Druidic; it played about the great facts and personages of history and it invested these with a background of the most solemn and imposing natural features. These dreams came to have with him the very semblance of reality. Read the terrible passages in the *Confessions* in which the Malay figures; read the dream fugues in "Suspira," the visions seen by the boy when he looked on his dead sister's face, or the noble pas-

sages that picture the three Ladies of Sorrow. Here is a passage on the vision of eternity at his sister's death bier, which gives a good idea of De Quincey's style:

> Whilst I stood, a solemn wind began to blow—the saddest that ear ever heard. It was a wind that might have swept the fields of mortality for a thousand centuries. Many times since upon summer days, when the sun is about the hottest, I have remarked the same wind arising and uttering the same hollow, solemn, Memnonian, but saintly swell; it is in this world the one great audible symbol of eternity.

It is a great temptation to quote some of De Quincey's fine passages, but most of them are so interwoven with the context that the most eloquent bits cannot be taken out without the loss of their beauty. De Quincey was a dreamer before he became a slave to opium. This drug intensified a natural tendency until he became a visionary without an equal in English literature. And these visions, evoked by his splendid imagination, are worth reading in these days as an antidote to the materialism of present-day life; they demonstrate the power of the spiritual life, which is the potent and abiding force in all literature.

Charles Lamb And The Essays of Elia

The Best Beloved of All the English Writers—Quaintest and Tenderest Essayist Whose Work Appeals to All Hearts.

Of all the English writers of the last century none is so well beloved as Charles Lamb. Thirty years ago his *Essays of Elia* was a book which every one with any claim to culture had not only read, but read many times. It was the traveling companion and the familiar friend, the unfailing resource in periods of depression, the comforter in time of trouble. It touched many experiences of life, and it ranged from sunny, spontaneous humor to that pathos which is too deep for tears. Into it Lamb put all that was rarest and best in his nature, all that he had gleaned from a life of self-sacrifice and spiritual culture.

Charles Lamb
From the Portrait by
William Hazlitt

Such men as he were rare in his day, and not understood by the literary men of harder nature who criticised his peculiarities and failed to appreciate the delicacy of his genius. Only one such has appeared in our time—he who has given us a look into his heart in *A Window in Thrums* and in that beautiful tribute to his mother, *Margaret Ogilvie*. Barrie, in his insight into the mind of a child and in his freakish fancy that seems brought over from the world of fairyland to lend its glamour to prosaic life, is the only successor to Lamb.

Lamb can endure this neglect, for were he able to revisit this earth no one would touch more whimsically than he upon the fads and the foibles of contemporary life; but it's a great pity that in the popular craze about the new writers, all redolent with the varnish of novelty, we should consign to the dust of unused shelves the works of Charles Lamb. All that he wrote which the world remembers is in Elia and his many letters—those incomparable epistles in which he quizzed his friends and revealed the tenderness of his nature and the delicacy of his fancy.

Robert Louis Stevenson is justly regarded as the greatest essayist of our time,

but I would not exchange the *Essays of Elia* for the best things of the author of *Virginibus Puerisque*. Stevenson always, except in his familiar early letters, suggests the literary artist who has revised his first draft, with an eye fixed on the world of readers who will follow him when he is gone. But Lamb always wrote with that charming spontaneous grace that comes from a mind saturated with the best reading and mellow with much thought. You fancy him jotting down his thoughts, with his quizzical smile at the effect of his quips and cranks. You cannot figure him as laboriously searching for the right word or painfully recasting the same sentence many times until he reached the form which suited his finical taste. This was Stevenson's method, and it leaves much of his work with the smell of the lamp upon it. Lamb apparently wrote for the mere pleasure of putting his thoughts in form, just as he talked when his stammering tongue had been eased with a little good old wine.

It is idle to expect another Lamb in our strenuous modern life, so we should make the most of this quaint Englishman of the early part of the last century, who seemed to bring over into an artificial age all the

dewy freshness of fancy of the old Elizabethan worthies. Can anything be more perfect in its pathos than his essay on "Dream Children," the tender fancy of a bachelor whom hard fate robbed of the domestic joys that would have made life beautiful for him? Can anything be more full of fun than his "Dissertation on Roast Pig," or his "Mrs. Battle's Opinion on Whist"? His style fitted his thought like a glove; about it is the aroma of an earlier age when men and women opened their hearts like children. Lamb lays a spell upon us such as no other writer can work; he plays upon the strings of our hearts, now surprising us into wholesome laughter, now melting us to tears. You may know his essays by heart, but you can't define their elusive charm.

Lamb had one of the saddest of lives, yet he remained sweet and wholesome through trials that would have embittered a nature less fine and noble. He came of poor people and he and his sister Mary inherited from their mother a strain of mental unsoundness. Lamb spent seven years in Christ's Hospital as a "Blue Coat" boy, and the chief result, aside from the foundations of a good classical scholarship, was a friend-

ship for Coleridge which endured through life. From this school he was forced to go into a clerkship in the South Sea house, but after three years he secured a desk in the East India house, where he remained for thirty years.

Four years later his first great sorrow fell upon Lamb. His sister Mary suddenly developed insanity, attacked a maid servant, and when the mother interfered the insane girl fatally wounded her with a knife. In this crisis Lamb showed the fineness of his nature. Instead of permitting poor Mary to be consigned to a public insane asylum, he gave bonds that he would care for her, and he did care for her during the remainder of her life. Although in love with a girl, he resolutely put aside all thoughts of marriage and domestic happiness and devoted himself to his unfortunate sister, who in her lucid periods repaid his devotion with the tenderest affection.

Lamb's letters to Coleridge in those trying days are among the most pathetic in the language. To Coleridge he turned for stimulus in his reading and study, and he never failed to get help and comfort from this great, ill-balanced man of genius. Later

he began a correspondence with Southey, in which he betrayed much humor and great fancy. In his leisure he saturated his mind with the Elizabethan poets and dramatists; practically he lived in the sixteenth century, for his only real life was a student's dream life. He contributed to the London newspapers, but his first published work to score any success was his *Tales From Shakespeare*, in which his sister aided him. Then followed *Poets Contemporary With Shakespeare*, selections with critical comment, which at once gave Lamb rank among the best critics of his time. He wrote, when the mood seized him, recollections of his youth, essays and criticisms which he afterward issued in two volumes.

Twenty-five essays that he contributed to the LONDON MAGAZINE over the signature of Elia were reprinted in a book, the *Essays of Elia*, and established Lamb's reputation as one of the great masters of English. Another volume of *Essays of Elia* was published in 1833. In 1834 Lamb sorrowed over the death of Coleridge, and in November of the same year death came to him. Of all English critics Carlyle is the only one who had hard words for Lamb, and the Sage of Chelsea probably

wrote his scornful comment because of some playful jest of Elia.

Charles Lamb's taste was for the writers of the Elizabethan age, and even in his time he found that this taste had become old-fashioned. He complained, when only twenty-one years old, in a letter to Coleridge, that all his friends "read nothing but reviews and new books." His letters, like his essays, reflect the reading of little-known books; they show abundant traces of his loiterings in the byways of literature.

Here there is space only to dwell on some of the best of the *Essays of Elia.* In these we find the most pathetic deal with the sufferings of children. Lamb himself had known loneliness and suffering and lack of appreciation when a boy in the great Blue Coat School. Far more vividly than Dickens he brings before us his neglected childhood and all that it represented in lonely helplessness. Then he deals with later things, with his love of old books, his passion for the play, his delight in London and its various aspects, his joy in all strange characters like the old benchers of the Inner Temple.

The essay opens with that alluring picture of the South Sea house, and is followed

Mary and Charles Lamb
From the Painting by F. S. Cary
made in 1834

by the reminiscences of Christ's Hospital, where Lamb was a schoolboy for seven years. These show one side of Lamb's nature–the quaintly reminiscent. Another side is revealed in "Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist," with its delicate irony and its playful humor, while still another phase is seen in the exquisite phantasy of "Dream Children," with its tender pathos and its revelation of a heart that never knew the joys of domestic love and care. Yet close after this beautiful reverie comes "A Dissertation On Roast Pig," in which Lamb develops the theory that the Chinese first discovered the virtues of roast suckling pig after a fire which destroyed the house of Ho-ti, and that with the fatuousness of the race they regularly burned down their houses to enjoy this succulent delicacy.

The Last Essays of Elia, a second series which Lamb brought out with a curious preface "by a friend of the late Elia," do not differ from the earlier series, save that they are shorter and are more devoted to literary themes. Perfect in its pathos is "The Superannuated Man," while "The Child Angel" is a dream which appeals to the reader more than any of the splendid dreams that De Quincey immortalized in

his florid prose. Lamb in these essays gives some wise counsel on books and reading, urging with a whimsical earnestness the claims of the good old books which had been his comfort in many dark hours. It is in such confidences that we come very close to this man, so richly endowed with all endearing qualities that the world will never forget Elia and his exquisite essays.

Dickens
The Foremost of Novelists

More Widely Read Than Any Other Story Teller—The Greatest of the Modern Humorists Appeals to the Readers of All Ages and Classes.

Charles Dickens is the greatest English novelist since Scott, and he and Scott, to my mind, are the greatest English writers after Shakespeare. Many will dissent from this, but my reason for giving him this foremost place among the modern writers is the range, the variety, the dramatic power, the humor and the pathos of his work. He was a great caricaturist rather than a great artist, but he was supreme in his class, and his grotesque characters have enough in them of human nature to make them accepted as real people.

To him belongs the first place among novelists, after Scott, because of his splendid creative imagination, which has peopled

the world of fiction with scores of fine characters. His genial humor which has brightened life for so many thousands of readers; his tender pathos which brings tears to the eyes of those who seldom weep over imaginary or even real grief or pain; his rollicking gayety which makes one enjoy good food and good drink in his tales almost as much as if one really shared in those feasts he was so fond of describing; his keen sympathy with the poor and the suffering; his flaming anger against injustice and cruelty that resulted in so many great public reforms; his descriptive power that makes the reader actually see everything that he depicts—all these traits of Dickens' genius go to make him the unquestioned leader of our modern story tellers. Without his humor and his pathos he would still stand far above all others of his day; with these qualities, which make every story he ever wrote throb with genuine human feeling, he stands in a class by himself.

Many literary critics have spent much labor in comparing Dickens with Thackeray, but there seems to me no basis for such comparison. One was a great caricaturist who wrote for the common people and brought tears or laughter at will from

Charles Dickens
at the Age of Twenty-seven—From the
Portrait by Daniel Maclise, R. A.

the kitchen maid as freely as from the great lady; from the little child with no knowledge of the world as readily as from the mature reader who has known wrong, sorrow and suffering. The other was the supreme literary artist of modern times, a gentleman by instinct and training, who wrote for a limited class of readers, and who could not, because of nature and temperament, touch at will the springs of laughter and tears as Dickens did. Dickens has created a score of characters that are household words to one that Thackeray has given us.

Both were men of the rarest genius, English to the core, but each expressed his genius in his own way, and the way of Dickens touched a thousand hearts where Thackeray touched but one. Personally, Thackeray appeals to me far more than Dickens does, but it is foolish to permit one's own fancies to blind or warp his critical judgments. Hence I set Dickens at the head of modern novelists and give him an equal place with Scott as the greatest English writer since Shakespeare.

Take it all in all, Dickens had a successful and a happy life. He was born in 1812 and died in 1870. His boyhood was hard

because of his father's thriftlessness, and it always rankled in his memory that at nine years of age he was placed at work pasting labels on boxes of shoe blacking. But he had many chances in childhood and youth for reading and study, and his keen mind took advantage of all these. He was a natural mimic, and it was mere blind chance that kept him from the stage and made him a great novelist. He drifted into newspaper work as a shorthand reporter, wrote the stories that are known as *Sketches by Boz*, and in this way came to be engaged to write the *Pickwick Papers*, to serve as a story to accompany drawings by Seymour, a popular artist. But Dickens from the outset planned the story and Seymour lived only to illustrate the first number.

The tale caught the fancy of the public, and Dickens developed Pickwick, the Wellers and other characters in a most amusing fashion. Great success marked the appearance of the *Pickwick Papers* in book form, and the public appreciation gave Dickens confidence and stimulus. Soon appeared *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Old Curosity Shop* and the long line of familiar stories that ended with *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, left unfinished by the master's hand.

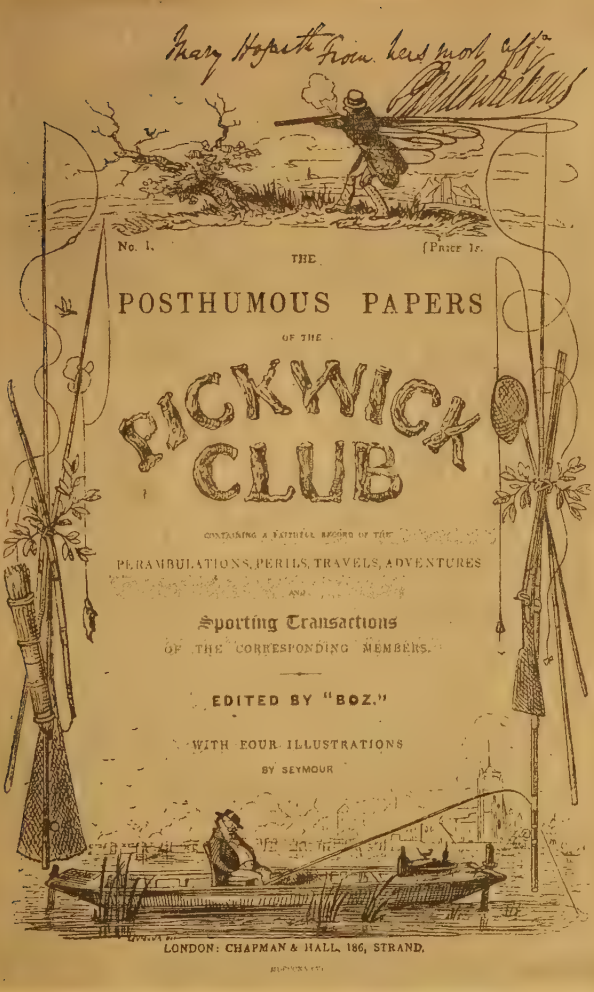
All these novels were originally published in monthly numbers. In these days, when so many new novels come from the press every month, it is difficult to appreciate the eagerness with which one of these monthly parts of Dickens' stories was awaited in England as well as in this country. My father used to tell of the way these numbers of Dickens' novels were seized upon in New England when he was a young man and were worn out in passing from hand to hand. Dickens first developed the Christmas story and made it a real addition to the joy of the holiday season. His *Christmas Carol* and *The Cricket on the Hearth* still stand as the best of these tales that paint the simple joys of the greatest of English Holidays. Dickens was also a great editor, and in HOUSEHOLD WORDS and ALL THE YEAR ROUND he found a means of giving pleasure to hosts of readers as well as a vehicle for the monthly publication of his novels.

Dickens was the first to make a great fortune by giving public readings from his own works. His rare dramatic ability made him an ideal interpreter of his own work, and those who were fortunate enough to hear him on his two trips to this country

speak always of the light which these readings cast on his principal characters and of the pleasure that the audience showed in the novelist's remarkable powers as a mimic and an elocutionist.

Most of the great English writers have labored until forty or over before fame came to them. Of such were Scott, Thackeray, Carlyle and George Eliot. But Dickens had an international fame at twenty-four, and he was a household word wherever English was spoken by the time he was thirty. From that day to the day of his death, fame, popularity, wealth, troops of friends, were his portion, and with these were joined unusual capacity for work and unusual delight in the exercise of his great creative powers.

In taking up Dickens' novels it must always be borne in mind that you will find many digressions, many bits of affectation, some mawkish pathos. But these defects do not seriously injure the stories. You cannot afford to leave *Pickwick Papers* unread, because this novel contains more spontaneous humor than any other of Dickens' work, and it is also quoted most frequently. The boy or girl who cannot follow with relish the amusing incidents in this book



ORIGINAL PICKWICK COVER ISSUED IN 1837 WITH DICKENS' AUTOGRAPH—MOST OF DICKENS' NOVELS WERE ISSUED IN SHILLING INSTALLMENTS BEFORE BEING PUBLISHED IN THE COMPLETE VOLUME

is not normal. Older readers will get more from the book, but it is doubtful whether they will enjoy its rollicking fun with so keen a zest. Mr. Pickwick, Sam Weller and his father, Bob Sawyer and the others, how firmly they are fixed in the mind! What real flesh and blood creatures they are, despite their creator's exaggeration of special traits and peculiarities!

After the *Pickwick Papers* the choice of the most characteristic of Dickens' novels is difficult, but my favorites have always been *David Copperfield* and *A Tale of Two Cities*, the one the most spontaneous, the freshest in fancy, the most deeply pathetic of all Dickens' work; the other absolutely unlike anything he ever wrote, but great in its intense descriptive passages, which make the horrors of the French Revolution more real than Carlyle's famous history, and in the sublime self-sacrifice of Sidney Carton, which Henry Miller, in "The Only Way," has impressed on thousands of tearful playgoers. That *David Copperfield* is not autobiographical we have the positive assertion of Charles Dickens the younger, yet at the same time every lover of this book feels that the boyhood of David reproduces memories of the novelist's childhood

and youth, and that from real people and real scenes are drawn the humble home and the loyal hearts of the Peggottys, the great self-sacrifice of Ham, the woes of Little Emily and the tragedy of Steerforth's fate. One misses much who does not follow the chief actors in this great story, the masterpiece of Dickens.

Other fine novels, if you have time for them, are *Nicholas Nickleby*, which broke up the unspeakably cruel boarding schools for boys in Yorkshire, in one of which poor Smike was done to death; or *Our Mutual Friend*, in which Dickens attacked the English poor laws; or *Dombey and Son*, that paints the pathos of the child of a rich man dying for the love which his father was too selfish to give him; or *Bleak House*, in which the terrible sufferings wrought by the law's delay in the Court of Chancery are drawn with so much pathos that the book served as a valuable aid in removing a great public wrong, while the satire on foreign missions served to draw the English nation's attention to the wretched heathen at home in the East Side of London, of whom Poor Jo was a pitiable specimen. In other novels other good purposes were also served.

But several pages could be filled with a mere enumeration of Dickens' stories and their salient features. You cannot go wrong in taking up any of his novels or his short stories, and when you have finished with them you will have the satisfaction of having added to your possessions a number of the real people of fiction, whom it is far better to know than the best characters of contemporary fiction, because these will be forgotten in a twelvemonth, if not before. The hours that you spend with Dickens will be profitable as well as pleasant, for they will leave the memory of a great-hearted man who labored through his books to make the world better and happier.

Thackeray Greatest Master of Fiction

The Most Accomplished Writer of His Century—Tender Pathos Under An Affectation of Cynicism and Great Art in Style and Characters.

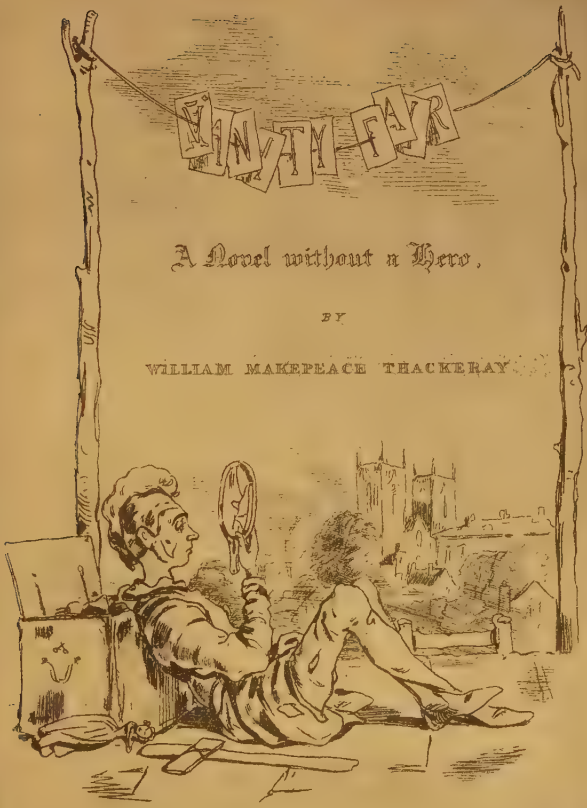
Of all modern English authors, Thackeray is my favorite. Humor, pathos, satire, ripe culture, knowledge of the world and of the human heart, instinctive good taste and a style equaled by none of his fellows in its clearness, ease, flexibility and winning charm—these are some of the traits that make the author of *Vanity Fair* and *Esmond* incomparably the first literary artist as well as the greatest writer of his age. Whether he would have been as fine a writer had he been given a happy life is a question that no one can answer. But to my mind it has always seemed as though the dark shadow that rested on his domestic life for thirty years made him infinitely

William Makepeace Thackeray
From a Drawing by Samuel Laurence,
Engraved by J. C. Armytage

tender to the grief and pain of others. Probably it came as a shock to most lovers of Thackeray to read in a news item from London only three or four years ago that the widow of Thackeray was dead, at the great age of ninety years. She had outlived her famous husband nearly a full half century, but of her we had heard nothing in all this time. When a beautiful young Irish girl she was married to the novelist, and she made him an ideal wife for a few years. Then her mind give way, and the remainder of her long career was spent within the walls of a sanatorium—more lost to her loved ones than if she had been buried in her grave. The knowledge of her existence, which was a ghastly death in life, the fact that it prevented him from giving his three young girls a real home, as well as barred him under the English law from marrying again—all these things to Thackeray were an ever-present pain, like acid on an open wound. It was this sorrow, from which he could never escape that gave such exquisite tenderness to his pathos; and it was this sorrow, acting on one of the most sensitive natures, that often sharpened his satire and made it merciless when directed against the shams and hypocrisies of life.

Thackeray's fame rests mainly on two great books—*Vanity Fair* and *Henry Esmond*. The first has been made very real to thousands of readers by the brilliant acting of Mrs. Fiske in Becky Sharp. The other is one of the finest historical novels in the language and the greatest exploit in bringing over into our century the style, the mode of thought, the very essence of a previous age. Thackeray was saturated with the literature of the eighteenth century, and in *Esmond* he reproduced the time of Addison and Steele as perfectly as he made an imitation of a number of the SPECTATOR. This literary *tour de force* was made the more noteworthy by the absolute lack of all effort on the novelist's part. The style of Queen Anne's age seemed a part of the man, not an assumed garment. While in the heroine of *Vanity Fair* Thackeray gave the world one of the coldest and most selfish of women, he atoned for this by creating in *Esmond* the finest gentleman in all English literature, with the single exception of his own Colonel Newcome.

Strict injunctions Thackeray left against any regulation biography, and the result is that the world knows less of his life before fame came to him than it does of



TITLE-PAGE TO "VANITY FAIR" DRAWN BY THACKERAY, WHO FURNISHED THE ILLUSTRATIONS FOR MANY OF HIS EARLIER EDITIONS

any other celebrated author of his age. The scanty facts show that he was born in Calcutta in 1811; that he was left a fortune of $100,000 by his father, who died when he was five years old; that, like most children of Anglo-Indians, he was sent to school in England; that he was prepared for college at the old Charter House School; that he was graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge, and that while in college he showed much ability as a writer of verse and prose, although he took no honors and gained no prizes. After reading law he was moved to become an artist and spent some time in travel on the Continent.

But this delightful life was rudely cut short by the loss of his fortune and he was forced to earn his living by literature and journalism. Under various pseudonyms he soon gained a reputation as a satirist and humorist, his first success being *The Great Hoggarty Diamond.* Then years of work for PUNCH and other papers followed before he won enduring fame by *Vanity Fair*, which he styled "a novel without a hero."

Charlotte Brontë, who gained a great reputation by *Jane Eyre*, added to Thackeray's vogue by dedicating to him in rarely eloquent words the second edition of her

novel, against which preachers fulminated because of what they called its immoral tendencies. Then in rapid succession Thackeray wrote *Pendennis*, *Henry Esmond*, *The Newcomes*, *The Virginians*, *Lovel the Widower* and *The Adventures of Philip*. All these are masterpieces of wit, satire and humor, cast in a perfect style that never offends the most fastidious taste, yet they are neglected to-day mainly because they do not furnish exciting incidents.

Thackeray, like Dickens in his readings, made a fortune by his lectures, first on "The English Humorists," and later on "The Four Georges," and, like Dickens, he received the heartiest welcome and the largest money returns from this country.

He died alone in his room on Christmas eve in the fine new home in London which he had recently made for himself and his three daughters.

Thackeray was a giant physically, with a mind that worked easily, but he was indolent and always wrote under pressure, with the printer's devil waiting for his "copy." He was a thorough man of the world, yet full of the freshness of fancy and the tenderness of heart of a little child. All children were a delight to him, and he never could

refrain from giving them extravagant tips. The ever-present grief that could not be forgotten by fame or success made him very tender to all suffering, especially the suffering of the weak and the helpless. Yet, like many a sensitive man, he concealed this kindness of heart under an affectation of cynicism, which led many unsympathetic critics to style him hard and ferocious in his satire.

Like Dickens, Thackeray was one of the great reporters of his day, with an eye that took in unconsciously every detail of face, costume or scene and reproduced it with perfect accuracy. The reader of his novels is entertained by a series of pen pictures of men and women and scenes in high life and life below stairs that are photographic in their clearness and fidelity. Dickens always failed when he came to depict British aristocratic life; but Thackeray moved in drawing-rooms and brilliant assemblages with the ease of a man familiar from youth with good society, and hence free from all embarrassment, even in the presence of royalty.

Thackeray's early works are written in the same perfect, easy, colloquial style, rich in natural literary allusions and frequently

rhythmic with poetic feeling, which marked his latest novel. He also had perfect command of slang and the cockney dialect of the Londoner. No greater master of dialogue or narrative ever wrote than he who pictured the gradual degradation of Becky Sharp or the many self-sacrifices of Henry Esmond for the woman that he loved.

Howells and other critics have censured Thackeray severely because of his tendency to preach, and also because he regarded his characters as puppets and himself as the showman who brought out their peculiarities. There is some ground for this criticism, if one regards the art of the novelist as centered wholly in realism; but such a hard and fast rule would condemn all old English novelists from Richardson to Thackeray.

It ought not to disturb any reader that Defoe turns aside and gives reflections on the acts of his characters, for these remarks are the fruit of his own knowledge of the world. In the same way Thackeray keeps up a running comment on his men and women, and these bits of philosophy make his novels a storehouse of apothegms, which may be read again and again with great profit and pleasure. The modern novel, with its comparative lack of thought and

William Makepeace Thackeray
A Caricature Drawn
by Himself

feeling, its insistence upon the absolute effacement of the author, is seldom worth reading a second time. Not so with Thackeray. Every reading reveals new beauties of thought or style. An entire book has been made up of brief extracts from Thackeray's novels, and it is an ideal little volume for a pocket companion on walks, as Thackeray fits into any mood and always gives one material for thought.

Of all Thackeray's novels *Vanity Fair* is the best known and most popular. It is a remarkable picture of a thoroughly hard, selfish woman whom even motherhood did not soften; but it is something more than the chronicle of Becky Sharp's fortunes. It is a panoramic sketch of many phases of London life; it is the free giving out by a great master of fiction of his impressions of life. Hence *Vanity Fair* alone is worth a hundred books filled merely with exciting adventures, which do not make the reader think. The problems that Thackeray presents in his masterpiece are those of love, duty, self-sacrifice; of high aims and many temptations to fall below those aspirations; of sordid, selfish life, and of fine, noble, generous souls who light up the world and make it richer by their presence.

Thackeray, in *Vanity Fair*, has sixty characters, yet each is drawn sharply and clearly, and the whole story moves on with the ease of real life. Consummate art is shown in the painting of Becky's gradual rise to power and the great scene at the climax of her success, when Rawdon Crawley strikes down the Marquis of Steyne, is one of the finest in all fiction. Though Becky knows that this blow shatters her social edifice, she is still woman enough to admire her husband in the very act that marks the beginning of the decadence of her fortunes. *Vanity Fair*, read carefully a half-dozen times, is a liberal education in life and in the art of the novelist.

Personally, I rank *Pendennis* next to *Vanity Fair* for the pleasure to be derived from it. From the time when the old Major receives the letter from his sister telling of young Arthur's infatuation for the cheap actress, Miss Fotheringay, the story carries one along in the leisurely way of the last century. All the people are a delight, from Captain Costigan to Fowker, and from the French chef, who went to the piano for stimulus in his culinary work, to Blanche Amory and her amazing French affectations. But *Pendennis* is not popular.

Nor is *Henry Esmond* popular, although it is worthy to rank with *The Cloister and the Hearth*, *Adam Bede* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. There is little relief of humor in *Esmond*, but the story has a strong appeal to any sympathetic reader, and it is the one supreme achievement in all fiction in which the hero tells his own story. Thackeray's art is flawless in this tale, and it sometimes rises to great heights, as in the scenes following the death of Lord Castlewood, the exposure of the Prince's perfidy, the selfishness of Beatrice and the great sacrifice of Esmond.

Space is lacking to take up Thackeray's other works, but it is safe to say if you read the three novels here hastily sketched you cannot go amiss among his minor works. Even his lighter sketches and his essays will be found full of material that is so far above the ordinary level that the similar work of to-day seems cheap and common. Happy is the boy or girl who has made Thackeray a chosen companion from childhood. Such a one has received unconsciously lessons in life and in culture that can be gained from few of the great authors of the world.

Charlotte Brontë And Her Two Great Novels

"Jane Eyre" and "Villette" are Touched With Genius—Tragedy of a Woman's Life That Resulted in Two Stories Of Passionate Revolt Against Fate.

Charlotte Brontë is always linked in my memory with Thackeray because of her visit to the author of *Vanity Fair* and its humorous and pathetic features. She went to London from her lonely Yorkshire home, and the great world, with its many selfish and unlovely features, made a painful impression on her. Even Thackeray, her idol, was found to have feet of clay. But this "little Puritan," as the great man called her, was endowed with the divine genius which was forced to seek expression in fiction, and nowhere in all literature will one find an author who shows more completely the compelling force of a powerful creative imagination than this

Charlotte Brontë
From the Exquisitely Sympathetic Crayon
Portrait by George Richmond, R. A.
now in the National Portrait
Gallery of London

little, frail, self-educated woman, who had none of the advantages of her fellow writers, but who surpassed them all in a certain fierce, Celtic spirit which forces the reader to follow its bidding.

He who would get a full realization of the importance of this Celtic element in English literature cannot afford to neglect *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, the best of Charlotte Brontë's works. Old-fashioned these romances are in many ways, oversentimental, in parts poorly constructed, but in all English fiction there is nothing to surpass the opening chapters of *Jane Eyre* for vividness and pathos, and few things to equal the greater part of *Villette*, the tragedy of an English woman's life in a Brussels boarding school.

Who can explain the mystery of the flowering of a great literary style among the bleak and desolate moors of Yorkshire? Who can tell why among three daughters of an Irish curate of mediocre ability but tremendously passionate nature one should have developed an abnormal imagination that in *Wuthering Heights* is as powerful as Poe's at his best, and another should have matured into the ablest woman novelist of her day and her generation?

These are freaks of heredity which science utterly fails to explain.

Charlotte Brontë was born in 1816 and died in 1855. She was one of six children who led a curiously forlorn life in the old Haworth parsonage in the midst of the desolate Yorkshire moors. The outlook on one side was upon a gloomy churchyard; on the other three sides the eye ranged to the horizon over rolling, dreary moorland that looked like a heaving ocean under a leaden sky. One brother these five sisters had, a brilliant but superficial boy, with no stable character, who became a drunkard and died after lingering on for years, a source of intense shame to his family. The girls were left motherless at an early age. Four were sent to a boarding school for clergymen's daughters, but two died from exposure and lack of nutritious food, and the others, starved mentally and physically, returned to their home. This was the school that Charlotte held up to infamy in *Jane Eyre*.

The three sisters who were left, in the order of their ages, were Emily, Charlotte and Anne. They, with their brother, lived in a kind of dream world. Charlotte was the natural story-teller, and she wove end-

less romances in which figured the great men of history who were her heroes. She also told over and over many weird Yorkshire legends. These children devoured every bit of printed matter that came to the parsonage, and they were as thoroughly informed on all political questions as the average member of Parliament.

At an age when normal girls were playing with their dolls these precocious children were writing poems and stories. Their father developed the ways of a recluse and never took his meals with his children. Living in this dream world of their own, these children could not understand normal girls. They were terribly unhappy at school and came near to death of homesickness. Finally Emily and Charlotte found a congenial school and in a few years they both made great strides in education. Charlotte tried teaching and also the work of governess, but finally both decided to open a girls' school of their own. To prepare themselves in French, Emily and Charlotte went to a boarding school in Brussels.

This was the turning point in Charlotte's life. Intensely ambitious, she worked like a galley slave and soon mastered French

so that she wrote it with ease and vigor. There is no question that she had a girlish love for her teacher, as passionate as it was brief, and that her whole outlook was broadened by this experience of a world so unlike the only one that she had known.

The story of Charlotte's life is told beautifully by Mrs. Gaskell, the well-known author of *Cranford*. It is one of the finest biographies in the language, and also one of the most stimulating. The reader who follows Charlotte's stormy youth is made ashamed of his own lack of application when he reads of the girl's tireless work in self-culture in the face of much bodily weakness and great unhappiness.

Read of her experiences in Brussels and you will get some idea of the tremendous vitality of this frail girl with the luminous eyes and the fiery spirit that no labor could tire. Mrs. Gaskell has drawn largely upon Charlotte's letters, which are as vivid and full of character as any of her fiction. Genius flashes from them; one feels drawn very close to this woman who raged against her physical infirmities, but overcame them bravely. When the spirit moved her she poured out her soul to her friend in words that grip the heart after all these years.

The boarding-school project fell through, and for some years the three sisters lived at home and devoted themselves to literary work. The first fruits of their pen was a small volume of poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell, the pseudonyms of Charlotte, Emily and Anne. This book fell practically stillborn from the press, but the sisters were undaunted and each began a novel. Without experience of life it is not strange that these stories lacked merit.

Charlotte drew her novel from her Brussels experience and called it *The Professor*. Though it was far the best, it was rejected, but Emily's *Wuthering Heights* and Anne's *Agnes Gray* were published. Emily's novel revealed a powerful but ill-regulated imagination, with scenes of splendid imaginative force, yet morbid and unreal as an opium dream. It received some good notices, but Anne's was mediocre and fell flat. Nothing daunted by the refusal of the publishers to bring out her first book, Charlotte began *Jane Eyre*, largely autobiographical in the early chapters, and this book was promptly accepted and published in August, 1847.

Jane Eyre was a great success from the day it came from the press. It was an epoch-making novel because it dragged into the

fierce light of publicity many questions which the English public of that day had decided to leave out of print. To us of today it contains nothing unusual, for modern women writers have gone far beyond Charlotte Brontë in their demands for freedom from many strict social conventions. What makes the book valuable is the glimpse which it gives of the wild revolt of a passionate nature against the coldness, the hypocrisy and the many shams of the social life of England in the middle of the last century.

This novel is also noteworthy for its intense picture of the sufferings of a lonely, unappreciated girl, who felt in herself the stirrings of genius and who hungered and thirsted for appreciation. The terrible pictures of Lowood, the fiction name of the Cowan's Bridge School, where her two sisters contracted their fatal illness, are stamped upon the brain of every reader, as are those of the humiliations of the governess. The style of this book was a revelation in that period of formal writing. Like Stevenson, Charlotte Brontë wrought with words as a great artist works with his colors, and many of her descriptions in *Jane Eyre* have never been surpassed. Hers was that brooding

Mrs. Gaskell
From the Portrait by George Richmond, R. A.
Mrs. Gaskell's "Life of Brontë" is one of the
Finest Biographies in the Language

Celtic imagination which, when given full play, takes the reader by the hand and shows him the heights and depths of human love and suffering.

The success of *Jane Eyre* opened wide the doors of London to the unknown author. For a time her identity was hidden, but when it was revealed she was induced to go up to London and see the great world. Thackeray was especially kind to her, but his efforts to entertain this Yorkshire recluse were dismal failures. Nothing is more amusing than his daughter's story of the great novelist, slipping out of the house one night, when he had asked several celebrities to meet Charlotte Brontë. The party was a terrible fiasco, and so he escaped, putting his finger to his lips as he opened the front door to warn his daughter that she must not reveal his flight. Charlotte's correspondence with her publisher is also full of pathos. It shows how keenly she felt her aloofness from the world, which she could not overcome.

The story of *Villette* is the real story of Charlotte's experiences in a Brussels boarding school, where she first tasted the delights of literary study and her genius first found adequate expression. The orig-

inal draft of this novel was called *The Professor*. Charlotte knew that it contained good material. So, after the death of her sisters, she took up the subject, and with all her mature power produced *Villette*—one of those novels struck off at a white heat, like George Sand's *Indiana* or Balzac's *Seraphita*. The story is largely autobiographical, but the episodes of Charlotte's life are touched with romance when they appear as the experiences of Lucy Snow, the forlorn English girl in the Continental school, among people of alien natures and strange speech.

In *Shirley*, Charlotte Brontë revealed much genuine humor in the malicious portraits of the three curates, who were drawn from real life. In fact, throughout her books one will find most of the characters sketched from real people. Hence, if one reads the story of her life he can trace her from her return from her Continental life down through the cruel years almost to the end. Back she came to her gloomy home from Brussels only to watch in succession the lingering death of her brother and her two sisters. Think of these three sisters, two marked for sure and early death, laboring at literary work every day with the

passion and intensity that come to few men. Think of Emily, the eldest, with fierce pride refusing help to climb the steep stairway of the parsonage home when her strength was almost spent and her racking cough struck cold on the hearts of her sisters. And think of Charlotte in her terrible grief turning to fiction as the only resource from unbearable woe and loneliness. It is one of the great tragedies of literature, but out of it came the flowering of a brilliant genius.

George Eliot And Her Two Great Novels

"Adam Bede" and "The Mill on the Floss"—Her Early Stories Are Rich In Character Sketches, With Much Pathos and Humor.

George Eliot is a novelist in a class by herself. She never impressed me as a natural story-teller, save when she lived over again that happy girlhood which served to relieve the sadness of her mature life. In parts of *Adam Bede* and throughout *The Mill on the Floss* she seems to tell her stories as though she really enjoyed the work. All the scenes of her beautiful girlhood in the pleasant Warwickshire country, when she drove through the pleasant sweet-scented lanes and enjoyed the lovely views that she has made immortal in her books—these she dwelt upon, and with the touch of poetry that redeemed the austerity of her nature she makes them live again, even

George Eliot in 1864
From the Etching by Mr. Paul Rajon—Drawn by Mr. Frederick Burton—From the Frontispiece to the First Edition of "George Eliot's Life," by Her Husband, J. W. Cross

for us in an alien land. So, too, the English rustics live for us in her pages with the same deathless force as the villagers in Hardy's novels of Wessex life. And George Eliot and Thomas Hardy are the two English writers who have made these villagers, with their peculiar dialect and their insular prejudices, serve the purpose of the Greek chorus in warning the reader of the fate that hangs over their characters.

Of all English novelists, George Eliot was probably the best equipped in minute and accurate scholarship. Trained as few college graduates are trained, she was impelled for several years to take up the study of German metaphysics. Her mind, like her face, was masculine in its strength, and though she suffered in her youth from persistent ill-health, she conquered this in her maturity and wrought with passionate ardor at all her literary tasks. So keen was her conscience that she often defeated her own ends by undue labor, as in the preparation for *Romola*, whose historical background swamps the story.

Above all she was a preacher of a stern morality. She laid down the moral law that selfishness, like sin, corrodes the best nature, and that the only happiness lies

in absolute forgetfulness of self and in working to make others happy. Thus all her books are full of little sermons on life, preached with so much force that they cannot fail to make a profound impression even upon the careless reader.

George Eliot impresses one as a very sad woman, with an eager desire to recapture the lost religious faith of her happy, unquestioning childhood and a still more passionate desire to believe in that immortality which her cold agnostic creed rejected as illogical. It was pitiful, this strong-minded woman reaching out for the things that less-endowed women accept without question. It was even more pitiful to see her, with her keen moral sense, violate all the conventions of English law and society in order to take up life with the man who stimulated her mind and actually made her one of the greatest of English novelists.

Left alone, it is very doubtful whether George Eliot ever would have found herself, ever would have developed that mine of reminiscence which produced those perfect early stories of English country life. To George Henry Lewes, the man for whose love and companionship she incurred social ostracism, readers in all English-

speaking countries owe a great debt of gratitude, for it was his wise counsel and his constant stimulus and encouragement which resulted in making George Eliot a writer of fine novels instead of an essayist on ethical and religious subjects. It detracts little from this debt that Lewes was also responsible for the stimulus of George Eliot's bent toward philosophical speculation and to that cold if clear scientific thought, which spoiled parts of *Middlemarch* and ruined *Daniel Deronda*.

Marian Evans was born at Ashbury farm in Warwickshire in 1819 and died in 1880. Her father was the agent for a large estate, and the happiest hours of her girlhood were spent in driving about the country with him. Those keen eyes which saw so deeply into human nature were early trained to observe all the traits of the English rustic, and those childish impressions gave vitality to her humorous characters. Before she was ten years old Marian had read Scott and Lamb, as well as *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Rasselas*. When thirteen years old she revealed unusual musical gifts. She had the misfortune at seventeen to lose her mother, and for years after she managed her father's house.

Evidently the old farmer, whom his daughter has sketched with loving hand in *Adam Bede*, took great pride in the mental superiority of his daughter, for he hired tutors for her in Latin, Greek, Italian and German. All four languages she mastered as few college men master them. She read everything, both old and new, and her intimacy with the wife of Charles Bray of Coventry led her to refuse to go to church. This free thinking angered her father and caused him to demand that she leave his house. After three weeks her love and her keen sense of duty led her to conform to her father's wishes and to resume the church-going, which in his eyes was a part of life that could not be dropped.

But that early departure from the established religion carried her into the field of German skepticism. She translated Strauss' *Life of Jesus*. For three years her studies were interrupted by the serious illness of her father. When he died she went to Geneva and remained on the Continent a year. Then she came home and took up her residence with the Brays. The development of her mind was very rapid. She served for some time as editor of the WESTMINSTER REVIEW. She then formed

George Eliot's Birthplace, South Farm, Arbury, Nuneaton

a strong friendship with Herbert Spencer, and through Spencer she met George Henry Lewes, who made a special study of Goethe and the German philosophers, and who was the editor of the LEADER, the organ of the Free Thinkers.

Lewes and Marian Evans soon became all the world to each other, but Lewes had an insane wife, and the foolish law of England forbade him to get a divorce or to marry again. So the two decided to live together and to be man and wife in everything except the sanction of the law. The result was disastrous for a time to the woman. There is no question that the social isolation that resulted hurt her deeply. Her close friends like Spencer remained loyal, and her husband was always the devoted lover as well as the ideal companion.

Two years after this new connection Lewes induced his wife to try fiction. Her first story was *The Sad Adventures of the Rev. Amos Barton* which was followed by *Janet's Repentance.* These stories appeared under the pen name of George Eliot, which she never relinquished. Gathered into book form under the title *Scenes From Clerical Life*, these stories in a minor key made a profound impression on Charles Dickens,

who divined they were the work of a woman of unusual gifts.

The praise of Lewes and the appreciation of Dickens and other experts gave great stimulus to her mind, and she produced *Adam Bede*, perhaps her best work, which had a great success. In the following year came *The Mill on the Floss*, an even greater success. Then in quick succession came the other early novels, *Silas Marner*, *Romola* and *Felix Holt*. A break of six years follows, and then came *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*.

Lewes died in 1878, and two years later this woman, almost exhausted by her tremendous literary labors, married J.W. Cross, an old friend, but, like Charlotte Brontë, she had only short happiness, for she died in the following year. The nations praised her, but she never recovered from the shock of Lewes' death.

Of George Eliot's work the things that impress one most are her fine descriptions of natural scenes, her keen analyses of character and her many little moral sermons on life and conduct. With an abnormal conscience and a keen sense of duty, life proved very hard for her. This is reflected in the somberness of her stories and in the

dread atmosphere of fate that hangs over her characters. But over against this must be placed her joy in depicting the rustic character and humor and her delight in reproducing the scenes of her childhood in one of the most beautiful counties of England.

Herbert Spencer, who was long associated with George Eliot, and for a time contemplated the possibility of a union with that remarkable woman, pays her a high tribute in *The Study of Sociology*. After explaining the origin in women of the ability to distinguish quickly the passing feelings of those around, he says: "Ordinarily, this feminine faculty, showing itself in an aptitude for guessing the state of mind through the external signs, ends simply in intuitions formed without assignable reasons; but when, as happens in rare cases, there is joined with it skill in psychological analysis, there results in extremely remarkable ability to interpret the mental states of others. Of this ability we have a living example (George Eliot) never hitherto paralleled among women, and in but few, if any, cases exceeded among men."

Perhaps the reader who does not know George Eliot would do well to begin with

The Mill on the Floss, her finest work, which is full of humor, lovely pictures of English rural life and an analysis of soul in Maggie Tolliver that has never been surpassed. Yet the end is cruel and unnatural, as hard and as unsatisfying as the author's own religious creed. Next read *Adam Bede*, one of the saddest books in all literature, with comic relief in Mrs. Poyser, one of the most humorous characters in English fiction.

George Eliot drew Dinah Morris from her favorite aunt, who was a Methodist exhorter, and the power and spontaneity of this novel came from the sharpness and clearness of her early impressions, joined to her love of living over again her girlhood days, before doubt had clouded her sky. Also read *Silas Marner* with its perfect picture of Raveloe, "an English village where many of the old echoes lingered, undrowned by new voices." These descriptions are instinct with poetry, and they affect one like Wordsworth's best poems or like Tennyson's vignettes of rural life. The pale weaver of Raveloe will always remain as one of the great characters in English fiction.

Of George Eliot's more elaborate work it is impossible to speak in entire praise.

If you have the leisure, and these books I have named please you, then by all means read *Romola*, which is a remarkable study of the degeneracy of a young Greek and of the noble strivings of a great-hearted woman. The pictures of Florence in the time of Savonarola are splendid, but they smell of the lamp. *Middlemarch* is also worth careful study for its fine analysis of character and motive. In all George Eliot's books her characters develop before our eyes, and this is especially true in this elaborate study of the pathos and the tragedy of human life.

George Eliot wrote little poetry, but one piece may be commended to careful attention, "The Choir Invisible." It sums up with impassioned force her ethical creed, which she put in these fine lines:

> Oh, may I join the choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence: live
> In pulses stirred to generosity,
> In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
> For miserable aims that end in self. * *
>
> This is life to come
> Which martyred men have made more glorious
> For us who strive to follow. May I reach
> That purest heaven, be to other souls
> The cup of strength in some great agony,

Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love.
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty—
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

This was the creed of George Eliot, which she preached in her books and which she followed in her life. This was the only hope of immortality that she cherished—to "live again" in minds that she stimulated.

Ruskin
The Apostle of Art

His Work As Art Critic and Social Reformer—Best Books Are "Modern Painters," "The Seven Lamps" and "The Stones of Venice."

John Ruskin deserves a place among the great English writers of the last century, not only because of his superb style and the amount of his work, but because he was the first to encourage the study of art and nature among the people. So enormous have been the strides made in the last twenty years in popular knowledge of art and architecture, and so great the growth of interest in the beauties of nature that it is difficult to appreciate that a little over a half century ago, when Ruskin first came into prominence as a writer, the English public was densely ignorant of art, and was equally ignorant of the world of pleasure to be derived from beautiful scenery.

It was Ruskin's great service to the world that he opened the eyes of the public to the glories of the art of all countries, and that he also revealed the wonders of architecture. Many critics have laid bare his infirmities as a critic, but a man of colder blood and less emotional nature would never have reached the large public to which Ruskin appealed. Like a great orator he was swayed by the passion of convincing his audience, and the very extravagance of his language and the ardor of his nature served to make a profound impression upon readers who are not usually affected by such appeals as his.

Ruskin was one of the most impractical men that ever lived, but in the exuberance of his nature and in his rare unselfishness he started a dozen social reforms in England, any one of which should have given fame to its founder. He gave away a great fortune in gifts to the public and in private generosity. He founded museums, established scholarships, tried to put into practical working order his dream of a New Life founded on the union of manual labor and high intellectual aims, labored to induce the public to read the good old books that help one to make life worth living.

John Ruskin
From a Photograph taken on July 20, 1882,
by Messrs. Elliott & Fry

That much of his good work was neutralized by his lack of common sense detracts nothing from the world's debt to Ruskin. The simple truth is that he was a reformer as well as a great writer, and the very fervor of his religious and social beliefs, his contempt of mere money getting, his hatred of falsehood, his boundless generosity and his childlike simplicity of mind—all these traits at which the world laughed lifted Ruskin above the other men of genius of his time and placed him among the world's great reformers.

Among this small body of men whose spiritual force continues to live in their books or through the influence of their great self-sacrifices, Ruskin deserves a place, for he gave fortune, work and a splendid enthusiasm to the common people's cause.

Ruskin's whole life was abnormal, and his early training served to accentuate those weaknesses of mind and will that made failures of so many schemes for the public good. If Ruskin had been trained in the English public schools he would have learned common sense in boyhood. As it was, his father and mother shielded the boy in every way from all contact with the world. Ruskin's father was a prosperous

wine merchant with much culture; his mother was a religious fanatic, whose passion for the Bible imposed upon her boy the daily reading of the Scriptures and the daily memorizing of scores of verses.

Such training in most cases causes a revolt against religion, but in Ruskin's case it resulted in training his boyish ear to the cadences of the Bible writers and in filling his mind with the sublime imagery of the prophets, with the result that when he began to write he had already formed a style, the richest and most varied of the last century.

The boy was a mental prodigy, for he taught himself to read when four years old, and at five he had devoured hundreds of books and was already writing poems and plays. At ten, when he had his first tutor, his knowledge was wide and he had become a passionate lover of natural scenery, as well as no mean artist with pen and pencil. Scott's novels and Byron's *Childe Harold* formed much of his reading at a time when most boys are content with the stories of Ballantyne or Mayne Reid. The range of his mental activity until he entered Oxford at eighteen was very wide. He was interested in mineralogy, meteorology,

mathematics, drawing and painting. What probably expanded his mind more than all else was the education of travel. His father spent about half his time journeying through England and the Continent in an old-fashioned chaise and John always shared in these expeditions. At Oxford he competed for the Newdigate prize in poetry, and after being twice defeated won the coveted honor. He never gained any high scholarship, but he received valuable training in writing.

There is no space here to chronicle more than a few of his many activities after leaving college. He first came into prominence by his passionate defense of the painter Turner against the art critics, and his study of Turner led him to adopt art criticism as his life work. At twenty-three years of age, when most youths are puzzled about their vocation, Ruskin had completed the first volume of *Modern Painters*, the publication of which gave him fame and made him a social lion in London. Other volumes of this great work followed swiftly and caused a great commotion in the world of art and letters because of the radical views of the author and the remarkable qualities of his style.

This was followed by *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, in which Ruskin expounded his radical views on this kindred art; *The Stones of Venice*, an eloquent book enforcing the argument that Gothic architecture sprang from a pure national faith and the domestic virtues; *King's Treasuries*, a noble plea for good books; *Fors Clavigera*, a series of ninety-six parts published in eight volumes, the record of his social experiments; *Preterita*, one of the most charming books of youthful reminiscences in any language, and many others. Ruskin's mental activity was enormous. He had to his credit in his fifty-five active years no less than seventy-two volumes and one hundred magazine articles, as well as thousands of lectures.

This outline sketch of Ruskin's life would be incomplete without mention of the great sorrows that darkened his days but gave eloquence to his writings. The first was the desertion of his wife, who married the painter Millais, and the second was the loss by death of Rose La Touche, a beautiful Irish girl whom he had known from childhood. She refused to marry him because of their differences of religion; even refused to see him in her fatal illness

John Ruskin
From the Semi-Romantic Portrait by
Sir John E. Millais

unless he could say that he loved God better than he loved her. Her death brought bitter despair to Ruskin, but the world profited by it, for grief gave his work maturity and force. The last ten years of Ruskin's life were spent at his beautiful home at Brantwood, surrounded by the pictures that he loved and served faithfully by devoted relatives.

Ruskin's books are not to be read continuously. Many dreary passages may be found in all of them, which the judicious reader skips. But his best works are more full of intellectual stimulus than those of any writer of his time with the single exception of Carlyle. *Modern Painters* overflows with the enthusiasm of a lover of art and of nature who preaches the gospel of sincerity and truth. It is marked, like all his work, by eloquent digressions on human life and conduct, for Ruskin held that the finest art was simply the flowering of a great soul nurtured on all that was highest and best. *The Seven Lamps* does for architecture what his first work did for painting. The book is written in more ornate style than any other, but he who loves impassioned prose will find many specimens here that can only by equaled in De Quincey's

best work. Read the peroration of the "Lamp of Sacrifice" and you will not need to be told that this is the finest tribute to the work of the builders of the mediæval cathedral. Here is a part of this eloquent passage:

It is to far happier, far higher exaltation that we owe those fair fronts of variegated mosaic, charged with wild fancies and dark hosts of imagery, thicker and quainter than ever filled the depth of midsummer dream; those vaulted gates, trellised with close leaves; those window labyrinths of twisted tracery and starry light; those misty masses of multitudinous pinnacle and diademed tower; the only witnesses, perhaps, that remain to us of the faith and fear of nations. All else for which the builders sacrificed has passed away. * * * But of them and their life and their toil upon earth, one reward, one evidence, is left to us in those great heaps of deep-wrought stone. They have taken with them to the grave their powers, their honors and their errors; but they have left us their adoration.

No space is left here to mention in detail Ruskin's other works, but *Unto This Last*, *The Stones of Venice*, *Sesame and Lilies* and *The Crown of Wild Olive* may be commended as well worth careful reading. Also *Preterita* is alive with noble passages, such as the pen-picture of the view from the Dale in the Alps, or of the Rhone below Geneva. Read also Ruskin's description of Turner's "Slave Ship" or the impressive

passage on the mental slavery of the modern workman in the sixth chapter of the second volume of *The Stones of Venice*. Read these things and you will have no doubt of the genius of Ruskin or of his command of the finest impassioned prose in the English language.

Tennyson Leads the Victorian Writers

The Poet Who Voiced The Aspirations Of His Age—"Locksley Hall," "In Memoriam" and "The Idylls of the King" Among His Best Works.

Of all the great English writers of the Victorian age it is probable that the next century will give the foremost place to Tennyson. Better than any other poet of his day, he stands as a type of the English people in obedience to law, in strong religious faith, in splendid imaginative force and in a certain unyielding cast of mind that made him bide his time during the dark years when he was bitterly criticized or coldly neglected. Tennyson had to the full the poet's temperament, but he had also a superb physique, which carried him into his eighty-fourth year. From a boy he was a lover of nature, and in nearly every poem that he wrote are found many proofs of his

Alfred, Lord Tennyson
After an Engraving by G. J. Stodart from a
Photograph by J. Mayall

close observation in English woods and fields. Through a period of general skepticism he kept unimpaired his strong faith in God and in immortality that lends so much force to his best verse.

Tennyson's genius found its natural expression in verse, and it is his distinction that while he explored many realms of thought he was always clear and always musical. Browning had more passion, but it was the misfortune of the author of *The Ring and the Book* that he could not refrain from a cramped and obscure style of verse that makes much of his work very hard reading. Many Browning societies have been formed to study the works of the poet whom they are proud to call master; but Tennyson needs no societies, as the man in the street and the woman whose soul is troubled can understand every line he has written. Nor is Tennyson lacking in passion, as any one may see by reading *Locksley Hall* or *Maud*.

Tennyson summed up in his poetry all the spiritual aspiration and the eager search for knowledge of his time. He explored all domains of thought, and he enriched his verse with the fruit of his studies. All the great elemental forces are found in his

poems: he is the laureate of love and sorrow, of grief and aspiration. Throughout his verse runs the great natural law that the man who is not pure in heart can never see the glory of the poet's vision.

The purity of his own life was reflected in his verse, just as the mad license and the furious self-indulgence of Byron are mirrored in *Don Juan*, *Manfred* and *Cain*. Even to extreme old age Tennyson preserved that high poetic faculty which he manifested in early youth. One of his latest poems, *Crossing the Bar*, is also one of the finest in the language, breathing the old man's assurance of a life beyond the grave and a reunion with the dear friend of his youth, whom he mourned and immortalized in *In Memoriam*.

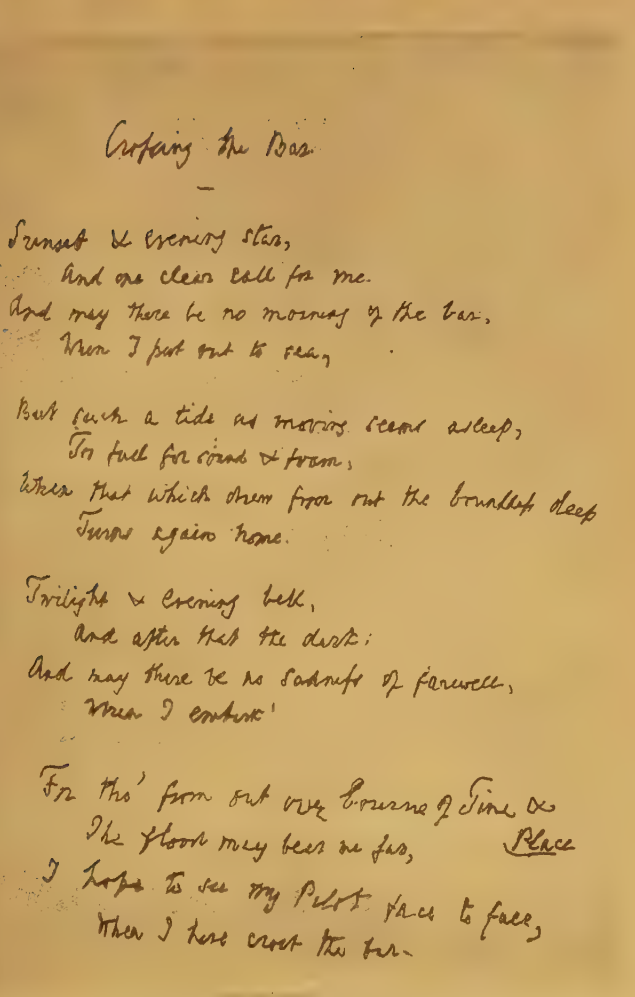
Alfred Tennyson had one of the finest lives in the roll of English authors. He was born in 1809 and lived to 1892. He spent his early years in one of the most beautiful parts of Lincolnshire. He enjoyed the personal training of his father, a very accomplished clergyman, and much of his boyhood and youth was spent in the open air. In this way he absorbed that knowledge of birds and animals, trees and flowers and all the aspects of nature which is

reflected in his verse. As a youth he experimented in many styles of verse, and when only eighteen he issued, with his brother Charles, *Poems by Two Brothers*. The next year he and Charles entered Trinity College, Cambridge. There they received the greatest impulse toward culture in a society of undergraduates known as the "Apostles." Its membership included Thackeray, Trench, Spedding, Monckton Milnes and Alfred and Arthur Henry Hallam, sons of the famous author of *The Middle Ages*.

In his second year at college Tennyson won the Chancellor's gold medal with his prize poem, *Timbuctoo*, and in the following year he published his first volume, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*. He left college without a degree, and in 1833 he issued another volume of poems which contained some of his best work—*The Lady of Shalott*, *The Lotos Eaters*, *The Palace of Art* and *A Dream of Fair Women*. Any one of these poems if issued to-day would make the reputation of a poet, but this book made little impression on the Victorian public which had lost its taste for poetry and was devoted mainly to prose fiction. The world has yet to catch the note of this master singer.

In 1837 Arthur Hallam, Tennyson's friend and other self, the one man who predicted that he would be the greatest poet of his age, died suddenly in Vienna while traveling abroad. The shock made a profound impression on Tennyson. For ten years he put forth no work. Finally, in 1842, he issued two volumes of poems that at once caught the public fancy. Among the poems that brought him fame were *Locksley Hall*, *Lady Godiva*, *Ulysses*, *The Two Voices* and *Morte d'Arthur*. The latter was the seed of the splendid *Idylls of the King*. Five years later he published *The Princess*, with its beautiful songs, and three years after *In Memoriam* the greatest elegiac poem in the language, in which he lamented the fate of Arthur Hallam and poured forth his own grief over this irreparable loss. In the same year he married Miss Emily Sellwood, who made his home a haven of rest and of whom he once said that with her "the peace of God came into my life."

Maud, his most dramatic poem, was issued in 1855. As early as 1859 he published the first part of *The Idylls of the King*, but it was not until 1872 that the complete sequence of the *Idylls* was given


Crossing the Bar

Sunset & evening star,
And one clear call for me.
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound & foam,
When That which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight & evening bell,
And after that the dark;
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time &
The Flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crost the bar.

FACSIMILE OF
TENNYSON'S ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT OF
"CROSSING THE BAR"
COPYRIGHT BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

to the public. These Arthurian legends are cast by Tennyson in his most musical blank verse, and he has given to them a tinge of mysticism that seems to lift them above the everyday world into a realm of pure romance and chivalry.

Enoch Arden, a domestic idyl, written in 1864, made a great hit. It was followed by several plays—*Queen Mary*, *Harold*, *Becket* and others—all finely written, but none appealing to the great public. Up to his last years Tennyson remained the real laureate of his people, his words always tinged with the fire of inspiration. Only three years before his death he wrote *Crossing the Bar*, a poem which met with instant response from the English-speaking world because of its signs of courage in the face of death and its proofs of steadfast faith in the life beyond the grave.

No adequate estimate of Tennyson's work can be made in the small space allotted to this article. All that can be done is to mention a few of his best works and to quote a few of his stirring lines. If the reader will study these poems he will be pretty sure to read more of Tennyson. To my mind, *Locksley Hall* is Tennyson's finest poem, as true to-day as when it was

written seventy years ago. The long, rolling, trochaic verse, like the billows on the coast that it pictures, suits the thought. The poem is the passionate lament of a returned soldier from India over the mercenary marriage of the cousin whom he loved. Here are a few of the lines that will never die:

Many a night I saw the Pleiades, rising through the mellow shade.
Glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangled in a silver braid.
Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.
Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of a fool!
Comfort? Comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.
But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.
Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime?
I the heir of all the ages in the foremost files of time.

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward, let us range,
Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change.
Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day:
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

It would be difficult among the poets of the last century to parallel these passages for their imaginative sweep and magnetic appeal to the reader. The new criticism that disparages Tennyson and raises Browning to the seventh heaven calls *Locksley Hall* old-fashioned and sentimental, but to me it is the greatest poem of its age. Next to this I would place *In Memoriam*, which has never received its just recognition. Readers of Taine will recall his flippant Gaelic comment on Tennyson's conventional but cold words of lament. Nothing, it seems to me, is further from the truth. The many beautiful lines in the poem depict the changing moods of the man who mourned for his dead and finally found comfort in the words of the Bible—the only source of comfort in this world for the sorely wounded heart. The whole poem, as his son Hallam says, emphasizes the poet's belief "in an omnipotent and all-

loving God, who has revealed himself through the highest self-sacrificing love in the freedom of the human will and in the immortality of the soul."

The meter of *In Memoriam* serves to fix the poem in the memory. It seems to fit the thought with perfect naturalness. It is not strange that Queen Victoria should have placed this poem next to the Bible as a means of comfort after the loss of her husband, whom she loved so dearly that all the attractions of power and wealth never made her forget him a single day.

The Idylls of the King are also unappreciated in these days, yet they contain a body of splendid poetry that cannot be duplicated. They represent the author's dreams from early youth, when his imagination was first fired by old Malory's chronicle of the good King Arthur. They breathe a chivalry as lofty as Sidney's, and they teach many ethical lessons that it would do the present-day world good to take to heart. These noble poems, cast in the most musical blank verse in our literature, were the work of thirty years, written only when the poet felt genuine inspiration. They represent, as the poet told his son, "the dream of a man coming into practical life

and ruined by one sin. It is not the history of one man or of one generation, but of a whole cycle of generations." And the old poet added these fine words: "Poetry is like shot silk with many glancing colors. Every reader must find his own interpretation according to his ability and according to his sympathy with the poet."

Other fine poems of Tennyson which one should read are the noble *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, *Break, Break, Break*, the perfect songs in *The Princess*, and *Crossing the Bar*. If you read these aright you will wish to know more of Tennyson, the poet who reconciled science and religion and kept his old faith strong to the end.

Browning Greatest Poet Since Shakespeare

How to Get the Best of Browning's Poems—Read the Lyrics First and Then Take Up the Longer and the More Difficult Works.

The greatest of English poets since Shakespeare, is the title given to Robert Browning by many admirers of recognized ability as critics. For his dramatic force and his insight into human nature there is no question that Browning deserves this high rank. In these two qualities he stands above Tennyson. But a large part of his work is written in a style so crabbed that it acts as a bar to one's enjoyment of many fine poems. Only the most resolute reader can go through *Sordello* or *The Ring and the Book*, the latter, with its interminable discussions of motive and its curious descriptions of half-forgotten legal and church methods of the seventeenth cen-

Robert Browning
From a Photograph by Hollyer after the
Portrait by G. F. Watts, R. A.

tury. If one-half this long poem of over twenty thousand lines had been cut out, it would have been vastly improved.

The advocates of Browning hold that the study of the poet's obscurities is good mental discipline, but I am of the belief that poetry, like music, should not demand too great exertion of the mind to appreciate its beauty. Wagner's "Seigfried" and "Parsifal" are altogether too long to be enjoyed thoroughly. The composer would have done well to eliminate a third of each, for as they are produced they strain the attention to the point of fatigue, and no work of art should ever tire its admirers.

In the same way Browning offends against this primal canon of art. A man who was capable of writing the most melodious verse, as is shown in some of his lyrics, he refused to put his thoughts in simple form, and often clothed them in obscurity. The result is that the great public which would have enjoyed his studies of character and his powerful dramatic faculty is repelled at the outset by the difficulties of understanding his poems. Browning added to this obscurity by constant reference to little-known authors. This was not pedantry, any more than Milton's use of classic mythology

was pedantry. Both men possessed unusual knowledge of rare books, and both were much given to quoting authors who are unknown to the general reading public.

But with all these difficulties in the way, there still remains a body of verse in Browning's work which will richly repay any reader. The lyrics and short poems like *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, *Pippa Passes*, *Prospice*, *O Lyric Love*, *The Last Ride*, *One Word More*, *How They Brought the Good News*, *Herve Riel*, the epilogue to *Asolando*, *The Lost Leader*, *Men and Women*, and *A Soul's Tragedy* will give any reader a taste of the real Browning. If you like these poems, then try the more ambitious poems like *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, *The Inn Album*, *Fifine at the Fair* and others.

Browning, above all other English poets, seems to have had the power of seizing upon a character at a crucial hour in life and laying bare all the impulses that impel one to high achievement or great self-sacrifice. He seems always to have worked at the highest emotional stress, so that his words are surcharged with feeling. In many of his poems this emotional element is painful in its intensity. Character to him was the main feature, and his selections

comprise some of the most picturesque in all history. That he was able to make these people live and move and impress us as real flesh-and-blood human beings shows the great creative power of the man, who ought to have written some of the world's finest plays.

Robert Browning was born in 1812 and died in 1889. His father, though a clerk in the Bank of England, was a fine classical scholar and had dabbled in verse. His mother was an accomplished musician. Browning had every early advantage, and while still a lad he came under the spell of Byron and had his poetical faculty greatly stimulated by the "Napoleon of rhyme." Then came Shelley and Keats, and their influence set him upon the course which he followed for many years. His first poem was *Pauline*, which has passages of rare beauty set among dreary commonplaces. He followed this with *Paracelsus* and *Strafford*, which opened to him the doors of all London salons and made his reputation. *Sordello*, one of his most difficult poems, came next, but he varied these dramatic tragedies with a series of short poems called *Bells and Pomegranates*. In this the finest thing was *Pippa Passes*, which was warmly

praised by Elizabeth Barrett, who afterwards became his wife. Among the many poems that Browning produced in five years were *Colombe's Birthday*, *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* and *A Soul's Tragedy*.

Browning, in 1846, married Elizabeth Barrett, the author of *Lady Geraldine's Courtship* and other poems, a woman who had been an invalid, confined to her room for years. Love gave her strength to arise and walk, and love also gave her the courage to defy the foolish tyranny of her father and elope with Browning. What kind of man that father was may be seen in his comment after the marriage: "I've no objection to the young man, but my daughter should have been thinking of another world." They went to Italy, where for fifteen years they made an ideal home. Mrs. Browning's story of her love is seen in *Sonnets From the Portuguese*, and some of her finest work is in *Casa Guidi Windows*. Each stimulated the other, while there was a notable absence of that jealousy which has often served to turn the love of literary men and women into the fiercest hatred.

Mrs. Browning died suddenly in 1861, and the poet for some time was stunned

Elizabeth Barrett Browning
After the Portrait by
Field Talfourd

by this unlooked-for calamity. He spent two years in seclusion at work on poems, but then he gathered up his courage and once more took his old place in the social life of London. In *Prospice* and *One Word More*, written in the autumn following his wife's death, he shows that he has overcome all doubts of the reality of immortality. These two poems alone would entitle Browning to the highest place among the world's great poets. In addition he wrote the memorial to his wife, *O Lyric Love*, that is the cry of the soul left here on this earth to the soul of the beloved in Paradise. To the sympathetic this poem, with its solemn rhythm, will appeal like splendid organ music.

Among Browning's other poems that are noteworthy are *Fifine at the Fair*, *Red Cotton Nightcap Country*, *The Inn Album* and *Dramatic Idyls*. Browning's last poem, *Asolando*, appeared in London on the same day that its author died at Venice. As the great bell of San Marco struck ten in the evening, Browning, as he lay in bed, asked his son if there were any news of the new volume. A telegram was read saying the book was well received. The aged poet smiled and breathed his last.

In beginning the reading of Browning it is well to understand that at least half or maybe two-thirds of his work should be discarded at the outset, as it is of interest only to scholars. My suggestion to one who would learn to love Browning is to get a little book, *Lyrical Poems of Robert Browning*, by Dr. A. J. George. The editor in a preface indicates the best work of Browning, and also brings out strongly the fact that readers, and especially young readers, must be given poems which interest them. His selections of lyrics have been made from this standpoint, and his notes will be found very helpful. He develops the point that Browning's great revelation to the world through his poems was his strong and abiding assurance that man has in him the principle of divinity, and that many of the experiences that the world calls failures are really the stepping stones of the ascent to that conquest of self and that development of the whole nature which means the highest life. He says also that Browning is one of the most eloquent expounders of the doctrine of the reality of a future life, in which those who live a noble and unselfish life will get their reward in an existence free from all physical ills.

In this little book will be found *Pippa Passes*, a noble series of lyrics, which develops the idea of the silent influence of a little silk weaver of Asolo upon four sets of people in the great crises of their lives. In each episode Pippa sings a song that awakens remorse or kindles manhood or arouses patriotism or duty. It is a perfect poem. Among other lyrics given here are *Evelyn Hope*, which must be bracketed with Burns' *To Mary in Heaven* or with Wordsworth's *Lucy* and *Prospice*, which sounds the note of deep personal love that is as sure of immortality as of life. It is as beautiful and as inspiring as Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*. Other poems due to Browning's love for his wife are *My Star* and *One Word More*.

If these lyrics appeal to you, then take up some of Browning's longer poems, *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, *Colombe's Birthday*, *A Soul's Tragedy*, *Fra Lippo Lippi* and *Rabbi Ben Ezra*. Very few readers in these days have time or patience to read *The Ring and the Book*, but it will repay your attention, as it is the most remarkable attempt in all literature to revive the tragedy of the great and innocent love of a woman and a priest.

Among the many fine passages in Browning, I think there is nothing which equals these lines in *O Lyric Love*, the beautiful invocation to his wife:

O lyric Love, half angel and half bird
And all a wonder and a wild desire—
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
Took sanctuary within the holier blue
And sang a kindred soul out to his face—
Hail then, and hearken from the realms of help!
Never may I commence my song, my due
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,
Except with bent head and beseeching hand—
That shall despite the distance and the dark,
What was, again may be; some interchange
Of grace, some splendor once thy very thought,
Some benediction anciently thy smile.

The songs in *Pippa Passes* should be read, as they are as near perfect as Shakespeare's songs or the songs of Tennyson in *The Princess*.

Meredith And a Few of His Best Novels

One of the Greatest Masters of Fiction of Last Century—"The Ordeal of Richard Feverel," "Diana of the Crossways" and Other Novels.

George Meredith is acknowledged by the best critics to be among the greatest English novelists of the last century; yet to the general reader he is only a name. Like Henry James, he is barred off from popular appreciation by a style which is "caviare to the general." Thomas Hardy is recognized as the finest living English novelist, but there is very little comparison between himself and Meredith. Professor William Lyon Phelps, who is one of the best and sanest of American critics, says they are both pagans, but Meredith was an optimist, while Hardy is a pessimist. Then he adds this illuminating comment: "Mr. Hardy is a great novelist; whereas,

to adapt a phrase that Arnold applied to Emerson, I should say that Mr. Meredith was not a great novelist; he was a great man who wrote novels."

It is only within the last twenty-five years that Meredith has had any vogue in this country. At that time a good edition of his novels was issued, and critics gave the volumes generous mention in the leading magazines and newspapers. But the public did not respond with any cordiality. The novel with us has come to be looked upon mainly as a source of amusement, and a writer of fiction who demands too keen attention from his readers can never hope to be popular. Meredith, as Professor Phelps says, was a great man who, among other intellectual activities, wrote some good novels. Doubtless he did more real good to literature as the inspirer of other writers than he did with his books. For more than the ordinary working years of most men he was one of the chief "readers" for a large London publishing house. To him were submitted the manuscripts of new novels, and it was his privilege to recognize the genius of Thomas Hardy, of the author of *The Story of an African Farm* and other now famous English novelists.

Meredith was a singularly acute critic of the work of others, but when he came to write himself he cast his thoughts in a style that has been the despair of many admirers. In this he resembled Browning, who never would write verse that was easy reading. Meredith's thought is usually clear, yet his brilliant but erratic mind was impelled to clothe this thought in the most bizarre garments. Literary paradox he loved; his mind turned naturally to metaphor, and despite the protests of his closest friends he continued to puzzle and exasperate the public. He who could have written the greatest novels of his age merely wrote stories which serve to illustrate his theories of life and conduct. No man ever put more real thought into novels than he; none had a finer eye for the beauties of nature or the development of character. But he had no patience to develop his men and women in the clear, orthodox way. He imagined that the ordinary reader could follow his lightning flashes of illumination, his piling up of metaphor on metaphor, and the result is that many are discouraged by his methods, just as nine readers out of ten are wearied when they attempt to read Browning's longer

poems. His kinship to Browning is strong in style and in method of thought, in his way of leaping from one conclusion to another, in his elimination of all the usual small connecting words and in his liberties with the language. He seemed to be writing for himself, not for the general public, and he never took into account the slower mental processes of those not endowed with his own vivid imagination.

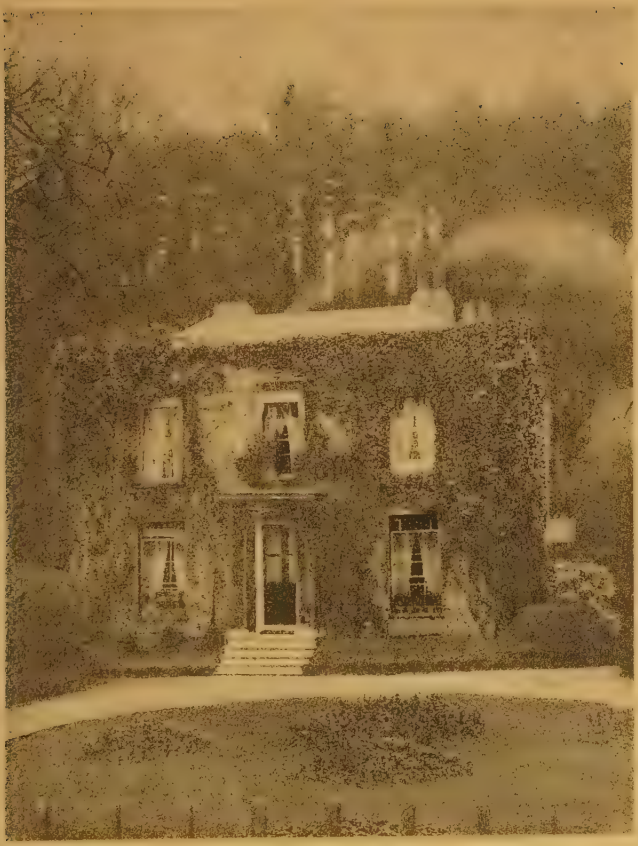
Meredith's life was that of a scholar; it contained few exciting episodes. He was of Welsh and Irish stock. At an early age he was sent to Germany, where he remained at a Moravian school until he was fifteen. He then returned to England to study law, but he never practiced it. For a number of years he was a regular contributor to the London MORNING POST, and in 1866 he acted as correspondent during the Austro-Italian war. For many years he served as chief reader and literary adviser to Chapman & Hall, the English publishers, and in that capacity he showed an insight that led to the development of many authors whose first work was crude and unpromising. Meredith himself began his literary career with *The Shaving of Shagpat*, a series of Oriental tales the central

George Meredith with His Daughter and Grandchildren—From a Photograph Taken Shortly Before His Death

idea of which is the overcoming of established evil. Shagpat stands for any evil or superstition, and Shibli Bagarag, the hero, is the reformer. This book, with its wealth of metaphor, opened the door for Meredith, but he did not score a success until he wrote *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, two years later. Despite its faults, this is his greatest book, and it is the one which readers should begin with. It is overloaded with aphorism in the famous "Pilgrim's Scrip," which is a diary kept by Sir Austin, the father of Richard. The boy is trained to cut women out of his life, and just when the father's theory seems to have succeeded Richard meets and falls in love with Lucy, and the whole towering structure founded on the "Pilgrim's Scrip" falls into ruin. The scene in which Richard and Lucy meet is one of the great scenes in English fiction, in which Meredith's passionate love of nature serves to bring out the natural love of the two young people. Earth was all greenness in the eyes of these two lovers, and nature served only to deepen the love that they saw in each other's gaze and felt with thrilling force in each other's kisses. But even stronger that this scene is that last terrible chapter, in which Richard

returns to his home and refuses to stay with Lucy and her child. Stevenson declared that this parting scene was the strongest bit of English since Shakespeare. It certainly reaches great heights of exaltation, and in its simplicity it reveals what miracles Meredith could work when he allowed his creative imagination full play.

Another story which is usually bracketed with this is *Diana of the Crossways*. This great novel was founded on a real incident in English history of Meredith's time. Diana Warwick was drawn from Caroline Norton, one of the three beautiful and brilliant granddaughters of Sheridan, author of *The School for Scandal*. Her marriage was disastrous, and her husband accused her of infidelity with Lord Melbourne, Prime Minister at the time. His divorce suit caused a great scandal, but it resulted in her vindication. Then later she was accused of betraying to a writer on the TIMES the secret that Sir Robert Peel had decided to repeal the corn laws. This secret had been confided to her by Sidney Herbert, one of her admirers. Meredith's novel, in which the results of Diana's treachery were brought out, resulted in a public inquiry into the charge against Caroline



Flint Cottage, Boxhill, the Home of George Meredith—His Writing was done in a Small Swiss Chalet in the Garden

Norton, which found that she was innocent. But the fact that Meredith used such an incident as the climax of his story gave *Diana of the Crossways* an enormous vogue, and did much to bring the novelist into public favor.

No more brilliant woman than Diana has ever been drawn by Meredith, but despite the art of her creator it is impossible for the reader to imagine her selling for money a great party secret which had been whispered to her by the man she loved. She was too keen a woman to plead, as Diana pleaded, that she did not recognize the importance of this secret, for the defense is cut away by her admission that she was promised thousands of pounds by the newspaperman at the very time that her extravagances had loaded her with debts.

Space is lacking here to do more than mention three or four of Meredith's other novels that are fine works of art. These are *Rhoda Fleming*, *Sandra Belloni*, *Evan Harrington* and *The Egoist*. Each is a masterpiece in its way; each is full of human passion, yet tinged with a philosophy that lifts up the novels to what Meredith himself called "honorable fiction, a fount of life, an aid to life, quick with our blood."

The novel to him was a means of showing man's spiritual nature, "a soul born active, wind-beaten, but ascending."

A score of novels Meredith wrote in his long life. The work of his later years was not happy. *The Amazing Marriage* and *Lord Ormont and His Aminta* are mere shadows of his earlier work, with all his old mannerisms intensified. But if you like Richard and Diana, then you can enlarge your acquaintance with Meredith to your own exceeding profit, for he is one of the great masters of fiction, who used the novel merely to preach his doctrine of the richness and fulness of human life if we would but see it with his eyes.

Stevenson
Prince of Modern Story-Tellers

His Stories of Adventure and His Brilliant Essays-"Treasure Island" And "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" His Most Popular Books.

It is as difficult to criticise the work of Robert Louis Stevenson as it is to find faults in the friend that you love as a brother. For with all his faults, this young Scotchman with his appealing charm disarms criticism. Nowhere in all literature may one find his like for warming the heart unless it be Charles Lamb, of gracious memory, and the secret of this charm is that Stevenson remained a child to the end of his days, with all a child's eagerness for love and praise, and with all a child's passion for making believe that his puppets are real flesh and blood people. When such a nature is endowed with consummate skill in the use of words, then one gets the finest, if not the greatest, of creative artists.

In sheer technical skill Stevenson stands head and shoulders above all the other literary craftsmen of his day; but this skill was not used to refine his meaning until it wearied the reader, as in the case of Henry James, nor was it used to bewilder him with the richness of his resources, as was too often the case with George Meredith. With Stevenson, style had actually become the man; he could not write the simplest article in any other than a highly finished literary way. Witness the amazingly eloquent defense of Father Damien which he dashed off in a few hours and read to his wife and his stepson before the ink was dry on the sheets.

Above all other things Stevenson was a great natural story-teller. With him the story was the main consideration, yet in some of his short tales such as *Markheim*, or *A Lodging for the Night*, or *The Sire de Maletroit's Door*, the story itself merely serves as a thread upon which he has strung the most remarkable analysis of a man's soul. He has the distinction of having written in *Treasure Island* the best piratical story of the last century. If he could have maintained the high level of the opening chapter he would have produced a work

worthy to rank with *Robinson Crusoe*. As it is, he created two villains, the blind man Pew and John Silver, who are absolutely unique in literature. The blind pirate in his malevolent fury is a creature that chills the heart, while Silver is a cheerful villain who murders with a smile. In *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* Stevenson has aroused that sense of mystery and horror which springs from the spectacle of the domination of an evil spirit over a nature essentially kind and good.

Stevenson came of a race of Scotch men of affairs. His grandfather was the most distinguished lighthouse builder of his day and his father gained prominence in the same work that demands the highest engineering skill with great executive capacity. Stevenson himself would have been an explorer or a soldier of fortune had he been born with the physical strength to fit his mental endowments. His childhood was so full of sickness that it reads like a hospital report. His life was probably preserved by the assiduous care and rare devotion of an old Scotch nurse, Alison Cunningham, whom he has immortalized in his letters and in his *A Child's Garden of Verse*. The sickly boy was an eager reader of every-

thing that fell in his way in romance and poetry. Later he devoted himself to systematic training of his powers of observation and his great capacity for expressing his thoughts.

His youth was spent in migrations to the south in winter and in efforts to thrive in Scotland's dour climate in the summer. His school training was fitful and brief, but from the age of ten the boy had been training himself in the field which he felt was to be his own. His first literary work was essays and descriptive sketches for the magazines. Then came short stories in which he revealed great capacity. Recognition came very slowly. He was comparatively unknown after he had produced such charming work as *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels With a Donkey*, not to mention the *New Arabian Nights*. Popularity came with *Treasure Island*, written as a story for boys, and the one work of Stevenson's in which his creative imagination does not flag toward the end; but fame came only after the writing of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*—the most remarkable story of a dual personality produced in the last century. After this he wrote a long succession of stories, not one of which can

Robert Louis Stevenson—The Author's Intimate Associates Pronounce this Photograph a Perfect Presentation of his most Typical Expression

be called a masterpiece because of the author's inability to finish his novels as he planned them. Lack of patience or want of sustained creative power invariably made him cut short his novels or end them in a way that exasperates the reader.

Some months Stevenson spent in California, but this State, with its romantic history and its singular scenic beauty, appeared to have little influence on his genius. In fact, locality seemed not to color the work of his imagination. His closing years were spent in Somoa, a South Sea Island paradise, in which he reveled in the primitive conditions of life and recovered much of his early zest in physical life. Yet his best work in those last years dealt not with the palm-fringed atolls of the Pacific, but with the bleak Scotch moors which refused him a home. In his letters he dwells on the curious obsession of his imagination by old Scotch scenes and characters, and on the day of his death he dictated a chapter of *Weir of Hermiston*, a romance of the picturesque period of Scotland which had in it the elements of his best work.

It is idle to deny that Stevenson appeals only to a limited audience. Despite his keen interest in all kinds of people, he

lacked that sympathetic touch which brings large sales and wide circulation. About the time of his death his admirers declared he would supersede Scott or Dickens; but the seventeen years since his death have seen many changes in literary reputations. Stevenson has held his own remarkably well. As a man the interest in him is still keen, but of his works only a few are widely read.

Among these the first place must be given to *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, partly because of the profound impression made upon the public mind by the dramatization of this tale, and partly because it appeals strongly to the sense of the mystery of conflicting personality. Next to this is *Treasure Island*, one of the best romances of adventure ever written. Readers who cannot feel a thrill of genuine terror when the blind pirate Pew comes tapping with his cane have missed a great pleasure. One-legged John Silver, in his cheerful lack of all the ordinary virtues, is a character that puts the fear of death upon the reader. The opening chapter of this story is one of the finest things in all the literature of adventure.

Of Stevenson's other work the two Scotch stories, *Kidnaped* and *David Balfour*,

Stevenson's Home at Valima, Samoa, Looking Toward Vaea

always seemed to me to be among his best. The chapter on the flight of David and Allan across the moor, the contest in playing the pipes and the adventures of David and Catriona in Holland—these are things to read many times and enjoy the more at every reading. Stevenson, like Jack London, is a writer for men; he could not draw women well. When he brings one in there is usually an end of stirring adventure, just as London spoiled *The Sea Wolf* with his literary heroine.

Of Stevenson's short stories the finest are *The Pavilion on the Links*, a tale of Sicilian vengeance and English love that is full of haunting mystery and the deadly fear of unknown assassins; *Markheim*, a brilliant example of this author's skill in laying bare the conflict of a soul with evil and its ultimate triumph; *The Sire de Maletroit's Door*, a vivid picture of the cruelty and the autocratic power of a great French noble of the fifteenth century, and *A Lodging for the Night*, a remarkable defense of his life by the vagabond poet, Villon. Other short stories by Stevenson are worth careful study, but if you like these I have mentioned you will need no guide to those which strike your fancy.

The vogue of Stevenson's essays will last as long as that of his romances; for he excelled in this literary art of putting his personality into familiar talks with his reader. He ranks with Lamb and Thackeray, Washington Irving and Donald G. Mitchell. Read those fine short sermons, *Pulvis et Umbra* and *Aes Triplex*, the latter with its eloquent picture of sudden death in the fulness of power which was realized in Stevenson's own fate. Read *Books Which Have Influenced Me*, *A Gossip on Romance* and *Talk and Talkers*. They are unsurpassed for thought and feeling and for brilliancy of style.

But above everything looms the man himself—a chronic invalid, who might well have pleaded his weakness and constant pains as an excuse for idleness and railings against fate. Stoic courage in the strong is a virtue, but how much greater the cheerful courage that laughs at sickness and pain! Stevenson writing in a sickbed stories and essays that help one to endure the blows of fate is a spectacle such as this world has few to offer. So the man's life and work have come to be a constant inspiration to those who are faint-hearted, a call to arms of all one's courage and devotion.

Thomas Hardy And His Tragic Tales Of Wessex

Greatest Living Writer of English Fiction—Because of Resentment of Harsh Criticisms the Prose Master Turns to Verse.

No one will question the assertion that Thomas Hardy is the greatest living English writer of fiction, and the pity of it is that a man with so splendid an equipment for writing novels of the first rank should have failed for many years to give the world any work in the special field in which he is an acknowledged master. Hardy seems to have revolted from certain harsh criticism of his last novel, *Jude the Obscure*, and to have determined that he would write no more fiction for an unappreciative world. So he has turned to the writing of verse, in which he barely takes second rank. It is one of the tragedies of literature to think of a man of Hardy's rank as a

novelist, who might give the world a second *Tess* or *The Return of the Native*, contenting himself with a ponderous poem like *The Dynasts*, or wasting his powers on minor poems containing no real poetry.

Hardy's best novels are among the few in English fiction that can be read again and again, and that reveal at every reading some fresh beauties of thought or style. The man is so big, so genuine and so unlike all other writers that his work must be set apart in a class by itself. Were he not so richly endowed his pessimism would be fatal, for the world does not favor the novelist who demands that his fiction should be governed by the same hard rules that govern real life. In the work of most novelists we know that whatever harsh fate may befall the leading characters the skies will be sunny before the story closes, and the worthy souls who have battled against malign destiny will receive their reward. Not so with Hardy. We know when we begin one of his tales that tragedy is in store for his people. The dark cloud of destiny soon obscures the heavens, and through the lowering storm the victims move on to the final scene in which the wreck of their fortunes is completed.

Thomas Hardy—A Portrait Which Brings out Strikingly the Man of Creative Power, the Artist, the Philosopher and the Poet

Literary genius can work no greater miracle than this—to make the reader accept as a transcript of life stories in which generous, unselfish people are dealt heavy blows by fate, while the mean-souled, sordid men and women often escape their just deserts. Hardy is not unreligious; he is simply and frankly pagan. Yet he differs from the classical writers in the fact that he is keenly alive to all the strong influences of nature on a sympathetic mind, and he is also a believer in the power of romantic love.

No one has ever equaled Hardy in making the reader feel the living power of trees and other objects of nature. You can not escape the influence of his scenic effects. These are never theatrical—in fact they seem to form a vital part of every story. The scenes of all his novels are laid in his native Dorsetshire, which he has thinly disguised under the old Saxon name of Wessex. In *Far From the Madding Crowd* Hardy first demonstrated the tremendous possibilities of rural scenes as a vital background for a story, but in *The Return of the Native* he actually makes Egdon heath the most absorbing feature of the book. All the characters seem to take life and coloring

from this heath, which has in it the potency of transforming characters and of wrecking lives. And in *Tess* the peaceful, rural scenes appear to accentuate the tragedy of the heroine's unavailing struggles against a fate that was worse than death.

Hardy's parents intended him for the church, but the boy probably gave some indications of his pagan cast of mind, for they finally compromised by apprenticing him to an ecclesiastical architect. In this calling the youth worked with sympathy and ability; the results of this training may be seen in the perfection of his plots and in his fondness for graphic description of churches and other picturesque buildings. One curious feature of this training may be seen in Hardy's sympathy and reverence for any church building. As Professor William Lyon Phelps very aptly says of Hardy: "No man to-day has less respect for God and more devotion to his house."

The antipathy of Hardy to any kind of publicity has kept the facts of his life in the background, but it is an open secret that much of the longing of Jude for a college education was drawn from his own boyhood. It is also a matter of record that as a boy he served as amanuensis for

many servant maids, writing the love letters which they dictated. In this way, before he knew the real meaning of sex and the significance of life he had obtained a deep insight into the nature of women, which served him in good stead when he came to draw his heroines. All his women are made up of mingled tenderness and caprice, and though female critics of his work may claim that these traits are overdrawn, no man ever feels like dissecting Hardy's women, for the reason that they are so charmingly feminine.

One may fancy that Hardy took great delight in his architectural work, for it required many excursions to old churches in Dorsetshire to see whether they were worth restoring. When he was thirty-one Hardy decided to abandon architecture for fiction. His first novel, *Desperate Remedies*, was crude, but it is interesting as showing the novelist in his first attempts to reveal real life and character. His second book, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, is a charming love story, and *A Pair of Blue Eyes* was a forerunner of his first great story, *Far From the Madding Crowd*. It may have been the title, torn from a line of Gray's *Elegy*, or the novelty of the tale, in which English

rustics were depicted as ably as in George Eliot's novels, that made it appeal to the great public. Whatever the cause, the book made a great popular hit. I can recall when Henry Holt brought it out in the pretty Leisure Hour series in 1875. Three years later Hardy produced his finest work, *The Return of the Native.* He followed this with more than a dozen novels, among which may be mentioned *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *The Woodlanders*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure.*

In taking up Hardy one should begin with *Far From the Madding Crowd.* The story of Bathsheba Everdene's relations with her three lovers, Sergeant Troy, Boldwood and Gabriel Oak, moves one at times to some impatience with this charming woman's frequent change of mind, but she would not be so attractive or so natural if she were not so full of caprice. His women all have strong human passion, but they are destitute of religious faith. They adore with rare fervor the men whom they love. In this respect Bathsheba is like Eustacia, Tess, Marty South or Lady Constantine. Social rank, education or breeding does not change them. Evidently Hardy believes women are made to charm and comfort

man, not to lead him to spiritual heights, where the air is thin and chill and kisses have no sweetness.

In his first novel Hardy lightened the tragedy of life with rare comedy. These comic interludes are furnished by a choice collection of rustics, who discuss the affairs of the universe and of their own township with a humor that is infectious. In this work Hardy surpasses George Eliot and all other novelists of his day, just as he surpasses them all in such wholesome types of country life as Giles Winterbourne and Marty South of *The Woodlanders*. No pathos is finer than Marty's unselfish love for the man who cannot see her own rare spirit, and nothing that Hardy has written is more powerful than Marty's lament over the grave of Giles:

"Now, my own, my love," she whispered, "you are mine, and on'y mine, for she has forgot 'ee at last, although for her you died. But I—whenever I get up I'll think of 'ee, and whenever I lie down I'll think of 'ee. Whenever I plant the young larches I'll think none can plant as you planted; and whenever I split a gad, and whenever I turn the cider-wring, I'll say none could do it like you. If I forget your name, let me forget home and heaven! But, no, no, my love, I never can forget 'ee, for you was a good man and did good things!"

The Return of the Native is generally regarded as Hardy's finest work. Certainly in this novel of passion and despair he has conjured up elements that speak to the heart of every reader. The hand of fate clutches hold of all the characters. When Eustacia fails to go to the door and admit her husband's mother she sets in motion events that bring swift ruin upon her as well as upon others. At every turn of the story the somber Egdon heath looms in the background, more real than any character in the romance, a sinister force that seems to sweep the characters on to their doom. *Tess* is more appealing than any other of Mr. Hardy's works, but it is hurt by his desire to prove that the heroine was a good woman in spite of her sins against the social code. What has also given this work a great vogue is the splendid acting of Mrs. Fiske in the play made from the novel.

In *Jude the Obscure* Hardy had a splendid conception, but he developed it in a morbid way, bringing out the animalism of the hero's wife and forcing upon the reader his curious ideas about marriage.

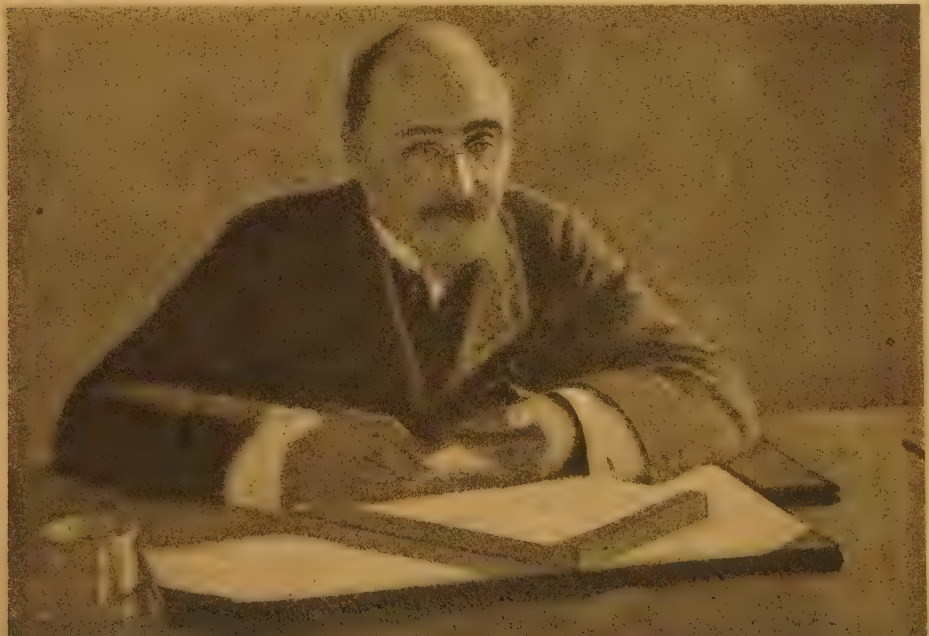
But above and beyond everything else Thomas Hardy is one of the greatest

story tellers the world has ever seen. You may take up any of his works and after reading a chapter you have a keen desire to follow the tale to the end, despite the fact that you feel sure the end will be tragic. Nothing is forced for effect; the whole story moves with the simplicity of fate itself, and the characters, good and bad, are swept on to their doom as though they were caught in the rush of waters that go over Niagara falls. Hardy's style is clear, simple, direct, and abounds in Biblical allusions and phrases. In nature study Hardy's novels are a liberal education, for beyond any other author of the last century he has brought out the beauty and the significance of tree and flower, heath and mountain. They may be read many times, and at each perusal new beauties will be discovered to reward the reader.

Kipling's Best Short Stories And Poems

Tales of East Indian Life and Character—Ideal Training of the Genius That Has Produced Some of the Best Literary Work of Our Day.

Rudyard Kipling cannot be classified with any writer of his own age or of any literary age in the past. His tremendous strength, his visual faculty, even his mannerisms, are his own. He has written too much for his own fame, but although the next century will discard nine-tenths of his work, it will hold fast to the other tenth as among the best short stories and poems that our age produced. Kipling is essentially a short-story writer; not one of his longer novels has any real plot or the power to hold the reader's interest to the end. *Kim*, the best of his long works, is merely a series of panoramic views of Indian life and character, which could be split up into a dozen short stories and sketches.



RUDYARD KIPLING
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But in the domain of the short story Kipling is easily the first great creative artist of his time. No one approaches him in vivid descriptive power, in keen character portraiture, in the faculty of making a strange and alien life as real to us as the life we have always known. And in some of his more recent work, as in the story of the two young Romans in *Puck of Pook's Hill*, Kipling reaches rare heights in reproducing the romance of a bygone age. In these tales of ancient Britain the poet in Kipling has full sway and his visual power moves with a freedom that stamps clearly and deeply every image upon the reader's mind.

The first ten years of Kipling's literary activity were given over to a wonderful reproduction of East Indian life as seen through sympathetic English eyes. Yet the sympathy that is revealed in Kipling's best sketches of native life in India is never tinged with sentiment. The native is always drawn in his relations to the Englishman; always the traits of revenge or of gratitude or of dog-like devotion are brought out. Kipling knows the East Indian through and through, because in his childhood he had a rare opportunity to

watch the native. The barrier of reserve, which was always maintained against the native Englishman, was let down in the case of this precocious child, who was a far keener observer than most adults. And these early impressions lend an extraordinary life and vitality to the sketches and stories on which Kipling's fame will ultimately rest.

The early years of Kipling were spent in an ideal way for the development of the creative literary artist. Born at Bombay in December, 1865, he absorbed Hindustanee from his native nurse, and he saw the native as he really is, without the guard which is habitually put up in the presence of the Briton, even though this alien may be held in much esteem. The son of John Lockwood Kipling, professor of architectural sculpture in the British School of Art at Bombay, and of a sister of Edward Burne-Jones, it was not strange that this boy should have developed strong powers of imagination or that his mind should have sought relief in literary expression.

The school days of Kipling were spent at Westward Ho, in Devon, where, though he failed to distinguish himself in his studies, he established a reputation as a clever

writer of verse and prose. He also enjoyed in these formative years the friendship and counsel of Burne-Jones, and he had the use of several fine private libraries. His wide reading probably injured his school standing, but it was of enormous benefit to him in his future literary work. At seventeen young Kipling returned to India, where he secured a position on the CIVIL AND MILITARY GAZETTE of Lahore, where his father was principal of a large school of arts.

The Anglo-Indian newspaper is not a model, but it afforded a splendid field for the development of Kipling's abilities. He was not only a reporter of the ordinary occurrences of his station, but he was constantly called upon to write short sketches and poems to fill certain corners in the paper, that varied in size according to the number and length of the advertisements. Some of the best of his short sketches and bits of verse were written hurriedly on the composing stone to satisfy such needs. These sketches and poems he published himself and sent them to subscribers in all parts of India, but though their cleverness was recognized by Anglo-Indians, they did not appeal to the general public. After

five years' work at Lahore, Kipling was transferred to the ALLAHABAD PIONEER, one of the most important of the Anglo-Indian journals. For the weekly edition of this paper he wrote many verses and sketches and also served as special correspondent in various parts of India.

It was in 1889 that the PIONEER sent him on a tour of the world and he wrote the series of letters afterwards reprinted under the title *From Sea to Sea*. Kipling, like Stevenson, had to have a story to tell to bring out all his powers; hence these letters are not among his best work.

Vividly do I recall Kipling's visit to San Francisco. He came into the CHRONICLE office and was keenly interested in the fine collections which made this newspaper's library before the fire the most valuable on this Coast, if not in the country. He was also much impressed with the many devices for securing speed in typesetting and other mechanical work. The only feature of his swarthy face that impressed one was his brilliant black eyes, which behind his large glasses, seemed to note every detail. He talked very well, but although he made friends among local newspapermen, he was unsuccessful in selling any of his stories to

Rudyard Kipling
From a Cartoon by W. Nicholson

the editors of the Sunday supplements. He soon went to New York, but there also he failed to dispose of his stories.

Finally Kipling reached London in September, 1889, and after several months of discouragement, he induced a large publishing house to bring out *Plain Tales From the Hills*. It scored an immediate success. Like Byron, the unknown young writer awoke to find himself famous; magazine editors clamored for his stories at fancy prices and publishers eagerly sought his work. It may be said to Kipling's credit that he did not utilize this opportunity to make money out of his sudden reputation. He doubtless worked over many old sketches, but he put his best into whatever he gave the public. He married the sister of Wolcott Balestier, a brilliant American who became very well known in London as a publishers' agent, and after Balestier's death Kipling moved to his wife's old home in Brattleboro, Vermont, where he built a fine country house; but constant trouble with a younger brother of his wife caused him to abandon this American home and go back to England, where he set up his lares at Rottingdean, in Surrey. There he has remained, aver-

aging a book a year, until now he has over twenty-five large volumes to his credit. In 1907 Kipling was given the Nobel prize "for the best work of an idealist tendency."

In reading Kipling it is best to begin with some of the tales written in his early life, for these he has never surpassed in vigor and interest. Take, for instance, *Without Benefit of Clergy*, *The Man Who Was*, *The Drums of the Fore and Aft*, *The Man Who Would Be King* and *Beyond the Pale*. These stories all deal with Anglo-Indian life, two with the British soldier and the other three with episodes in the lives of British officials and adventurers.

The Man Who Would Be King, the finest of all Kipling's tales of Anglo-Indian life and adventure, is the story of the fatal ambition of Daniel Dravot, told by the man who accompanied him into the wildest part of Afghanistan. Daniel made the natives believe that he was a god and he could have ruled them as a king had he not foolishly become enamored of a native beauty. This girl was prompted by a native soothsayer to bite Dravot in order to decide whether he was a god or merely human. The blood that she drew on his neck was ample proof of his spurious claims and the

two adventurers were chased for miles through a wild country. When captured Daniel is forced to walk upon a bridge, the ropes of which are then cut, and his body is hurled hundreds of feet down upon the rocks. The story of the survivor, who escaped after crucifixion, is one of the ghastliest tales in all literature.

Other tales that Kipling has written of Indian life are scarcely inferior to these in strange, uncanny power. One of the weirdest relates the adventures of an army officer who fell into the place where those who have been legally declared dead, but who have recovered, pass their lives. As a picture of hell on earth it has never been surpassed. Another of Kipling's Indian tales that is worth reading is *William the Conqueror*, a love story that has a background of grim work during the famine year.

One of Kipling's claims to fame is that he has drawn the British soldier in India as he actually lives. His *Soldiers Three*—Mulvaney, the Irishman, Ortheris, the cockney, and Learoyd, the Yorkshireman—are so full of real human nature that they delight all men and many women. Mulvaney is the finest creation of Kipling, and

most of his stories are brimful of Irish wit. Of late years Kipling has written some fine imaginative stories, such as *The Brushwood Boy*, *They* and *An Habitation Enforced*. He has also revealed his genius in such tales of the future as *With the Night Mail*, a remarkably graphic sketch of a voyage across the Atlantic in a single night in a great aeroplane. Another side of Kipling's genius is seen in his *Jungle Stories*, in which all the wild animals are endowed with speech. Mowgli, the boy who is suckled by a wolf, is a distinct creation, and his adventures are full of interest. Compare these stories with the work of Thompson-Seton and you get a good idea of the genius of Kipling in making real the savage struggle for life in the Indian jungle.

Of Kipling's long novels *The Naulakha* ranks first for interest of plot, but *Kim* is the best because of its series of wonderful pictures of East Indian life and character. *Captains Courageous* is a story of Cape Cod fishing life, with an improbable plot but much good description of the perils and hardships of the men who seek fortune on the fishing banks.

As a poet Kipling appeals strongly to men who love the life of action and adven-

ture in all parts of the world. In his *Departmental Ditties* he has painted the life of the British soldier and the civilian in India, and his *Danny Dever*, his *Mandalay* and others which sing themselves have passed into the memory of the great public that seldom reads any verse unless it be the words of a popular song. The range of his verse is very wide, whether it is the superb imagery in *The Last Chantey* or the impressive Calvanism of *McAndrew's Hymn*. His *Recessional*, of course, is known to everyone. It is one of the finest bits of verse printed in the last twenty years.

Kipling, in spite of his many volumes, is only forty-six years old, and he may be counted on to do much more good work.

If he turns to historical fiction he may yet do for English history what the author of *Waverley* has done for the history of Scotland. Certainly he has the finest creative imagination of his age; in whatever domain it may work it is sure to produce literature that will live.

Bibliography

Short Notes of Both Standard and Other Editions, With Lives, Sketches and Reminiscences.

These bibliographical notes on the authors discussed in this volume are brief because the space allotted to them was limited. They are designed to mention the first complete editions—the standard editions—as well as the lives of authors, estimates of their works and sketches and personal reminiscences. A mass of good material on the great writers of the Victorian age is buried in the bound volumes of English and American reviews and magazines. The best guide to these articles is Poole's "Index."

The most valuable single volumes to one who wishes to make a study of eighteenth and nineteenth century English writers are: "A Study of English Prose Writers" and "A Study of English and American Poets," by J. Scott Clark. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Price, $2 net a volume.) These two volumes will give any one who wishes to make

a study of the authors I have discussed the material for a mastery of their works. Under full biographical sketches the author gives estimates of the best critics, extracts from their works and a full bibliography, including the best magazine articles.

MACAULAY

The editions of Macaulay are so numerous that it is useless to attempt to enumerate them. A standard edition was collected in 1866 by his sister, Lady Trevelyan. Four volumes are devoted to the history and three to the essays and lives of famous authors which he wrote for the *Encyclopedia Brittanica*. Macaulay's essays, which have enjoyed the greatest popularity in this country, may be found in many forms. A one-volume edition, containing the principal essays, is issued by several publishers. Sir George Otto Trevelyan's *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* in two volumes (1876) is a more interesting biography than Lockhart's *Scott*. The best single-volume estimate of Macaulay is J. Cotter Morison's *Macaulay* in the English Men of Letter's series. Good short critical sketches of Macaulay and his work may be found in Sir Leslie Stephen's *Hours in a Library*, volume 2, and in Lord Morley's *Critical Miscellanies*, volume 2.

SCOTT

The edition of Scott, which was his own favorite, was issued in Edinburgh in forty-eight volumes, from 1829 to 1833. Scott wrote new prefaces and notes for this edition. Another is the Border edition, with introductory essays and notes by Andrew Lang (forty-

eight volumes, 1892-1894). The recent editions of Scott are numerous for, despite all criticisms of his careless style, he holds his own with the popular favorites of the day. Of his poems a good edition was edited by William Minto in two volumes, in 1888. *The Life of Scott* by his son-in-law, J. G. Lockhart, is the standard work. This was originally issued in seven volumes but Lockhart was induced to condense it into one volume, which gives about all that the ordinary reader cares for. This may be found in Everyman's library. Scott's *Journal* and his *Familiar Letters*, both edited by David Douglas, contain much interesting material. The best short lives of Scott are by R. H. Hutton in the English Men of Letters series and by George Saintsbury in the Famous Scots series. Among the best sketches and estimates of Scott are by Andrew Lang in *Letters to Dead Authors;* Sir Leslie Stephen in *Hours in a Library;* Conan Doyle in *Through the Magic Door;* Walter Bagehot in *Literary Studies;* Stevenson in *Gossip on Romance* and in *Memoirs and Portraits*, and S. R. Crockett in *The Scott Country. Abbotsford*, by Washington Irving, gives the best personal sketches of Scott at home.

CARLYLE

Carlyle's *Essays* and his *French Revolution*, upon which his fame will chiefly rest, are issued in many editions. It would be well if his longer works could be condensed into single volumes by competent hands. A revised edition of his *Frederick* was issued in one short volume. For the facts of Carlyle's life, the best book is his own *Reminiscences* issued in 1881 and edited by Froude, who was his literary executor with the full power to publish or suppress. Froude had so great

an antipathy to what Carlyle himself called "mealy-mouthed biography" that he erred on the side of extreme frankness. In *Thomas Carlyle—The First Forty Years of His Life, Life in London* and *Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle*, Froude permitted the publication of many malicious comments by Carlyle on his famous contemporaries. These and morbid expressions of remorse by Carlyle over imaginary neglect of his wife caused a great revulsion of public sentiment and the fame of Carlyle was clouded for ten years. Finally, after much acrimonious controversy, the truth prevailed and Carlyle came into his own again.

Among the best books on Carlyle are Lowell's *Essays*, volume 2; David Masson, *Carlyle Personally and in His Writings;* E. P. Whipple, *Essays and Reviews;* Emerson, *English Traits;* Lowell, *My Study Windows;* Morley, *English Literature in the Reign of Victoria;* Greg, *Literary and Social Judgments;* Moncure Conway, *Carlyle*, and Henley, *Views and Reviews*.

Among magazine and review articles may be mentioned George Eliot in WESTMINSTER REVIEW, volume 57; John Burroughs in ATLANTIC MONTHLY, volume 51; Emerson in SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE, volume 22; Froude in NINETEENTH CENTURY, volume 10, and Leslie Stephen in CORNHILL, volume 44.

DE QUINCEY

It is a curious fact that the first complete edition of De Quincey's works was issued in Boston in twenty volumes (1850-1855) by Ticknor & Fields. Much of the material was gathered from English periodicals, as De Quincey was the greatest magazine writer of his age. This was followed by the Riverside edition in twelve volumes (Boston, 1877). The standard English

edition is *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, fourteen volumes, edited by David Masson (1889-1890). A. H. Japp wrote the standard English *Life of De Quincey* (London, two volumes, 1879). The best short life is Masson's in the English Men of Letters series. George Saintsbury gives a good sketch of De Quincey in *Essays in English Literature*. Other estimates may be found in the following works: Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library;* H. A. Page, *De Quincey, His Life and Writings* and in Mrs. Oliphant's *Literary History of England*.

LAMB

Reprints of the *Essays of Elia* have been very numerous. One of the best editions of Lamb's complete works was edited by E. V. Lucas in seven volumes, to which he added in 1905 *The Life of Charles Lamb* in two volumes. Another is *Complete Works and Correspondence*, edited by Canon Ainger (London, six volumes). Ainger also wrote an excellent short life of Lamb for the English Men of Letters series. Hazlitt and Percy Fitzgerald have revised Thomas Noon Talfourd's standard *Letters of Charles Lamb, With a Sketch of His Life*. Among sketches of the life of Charles and Mary Lamb may be noted Barry Cornwall's *Charles Lamb—A Memoir;* Fitzgerald, *Charles Lamb: His Friends, His Haunts and His Books;* Walter Pater, *Appreciations;* R. H. Stoddard, *Personal Recollections;* Augustine Birrell, *Res Judicatæ;* Nicoll, *Landmarks of English Literature;* Talfourd, *Final Memorials of Charles Lamb;* Hutton, *Literary Landmarks of London*.

DICKENS

The first collective edition of Dickens' works was issued in 1847. The standard edition is that of Chap-

man & Hall, London, who were the original publishers of *Pickwick*. One of the best of the many editions of Dickens is the Macmillan Pocket edition with reproductions of the original covers of the monthly parts of the novels as they appeared, the original illustrations by Cruikshank, Leech, "Phiz" (Hablot Browne) and others, and valuable and interesting introductions by Charles Dickens the younger. Another good edition is in the World's Classics, with brilliant introductions by G. K. Chesterton. In buying an edition of Dickens it is well to get one with reproductions of the original illustrations, as these add much to the pleasure and interest of the novels.

For ready reference to Dickens' works there is a *Dickens Dictionary*, giving the names of all characters and places in the novels, by G. A. Pierce, and another similar work by A. J. Philip. Mary Williams has also prepared a *Dickens Concordance*.

Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens*, in three volumes, is the standard work, as Forster was closely connected with the novelist from the time he made his hit with *Pickwick*. George Gissing, the novelist, made an abridgment of Forster's *Life* in one volume, which is well done. Scores of shorter lives and sketches have been written. Among the best of these are Dr. A. W. Ward's *Charles Dickens* in the English Men of Letters series; Taine's chapter on Dickens in his *History of English Literature;* Sir Leslie Stephen's article in the *Dictionary of National Biography;* Mrs. Oliphant's *The Victorian Age in English Literature;* F. G. Kitton's *Charles Dickens: His Life, Writings and Personality. The Letters*, edited by Miss Hogarth and Mary Dickens, are valuable for the light they throw on the novelist's character and work.

In reminiscence of Dickens, the best books are Mary Dickens' *My Father as I Recall Him;* J. T. Fields' *In and Out of Doors With Charles Dickens* and G. Dolby's *Charles Dickens as I Knew Him,* the last devoted to the famous reading tours. Edmund Yates, Anthony Trollope, James Payn, R. H. Haine and many others have written readable reminiscences.

For the home life of Dickens and his haunts see F. G. Kitton's *The Dickens Country;* Thomas Fort's *In Kent With Charles Dickens* and H. S. Ward's *The Real Dickens Land.* Of poems on Dickens' death the very best is Bret Harte's *Dickens in Camp. The Wisdom of Dickens,* compiled by Temple Scott, is a good collection of extracts.

THACKERAY

Almost as many editions of Thackeray's works have been published as of Dickens' novels, and the reader in his selection must be guided largely by his own taste. In choosing an edition, however, always get one that contains Thackeray's own illustrations, as, though the drawing is frequently crude, the sketches are full of humor and help one to understand the author's conception of the characters. The best general edition is *The Biographical,* with introductions by his daughter, Mrs. Richmond Ritchie (London, 1897-1900). The Charterhouse edition of Thackeray in twenty-six volumes, published in England by Smith, Elder & Co. and in this country by Lippincott, is an excellent library set containing all the original illustrations.

No regular biography of Thackeray has ever been written because of his expressed wish, but his daughter, Mrs. Richmond Ritchie, has supplied this lack with many sketches and introductions to various editions of

her father's works. Anthony Trollope in his autobiography gives many charming glimpses of Thackeray but his sketch of Thackeray in the English Men of Letters series is not warmly appreciative.

One of the best short estimates of Thackeray is Charles Whibley's *Thackeray* (1905). Also valuable are sketches by Frederic Harrison in *Early Victorian Literature;* Brownell, *Early Victorian Masters;* Whipple, *Character and Characteristic Men;* R. H. Stoddard, *Anecdote Biography of Thackeray;* Andrew Lang, *Letters to Dead Authors;* G. T. Fields, *Yesterdays With Authors;* Jeaffreson, *Novels and Novelists* and W. B. Jerrold *The Best of All Good Company.*

The reviews and magazines, especially in the last ten years, have abounded in articles on Thackeray. Among these the best have appeared in SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE. A small volume, *The Sense and Sentiment of Thackeray* (Harper's, 1909), gives numerous good extracts from the novels as well as from the essays.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

Smith, Elder & Co. of London were the publishers of *Jane Eyre* and they also issued the first collected edition of Charlotte Brontë's works. This firm still publishes the standard English edition, the Haworth edition, with admirable introductions by Mrs. Humphrey Ward and with many illustrations from photographs of the places and people made memorable in Charlotte's novels. A good American edition is the Shirley edition, with excellent illustrations, many of them reproductions of rare daguerreotypes.

The standard life of Charlotte Brontë until fifteen years ago was Mrs. Gaskell's, one of the most appealing stories in all literature. Clement K. Shorter's

Charlotte Brontë and Her Circle is now indispensable because of the mass of facts that the author has gathered in regard to the life of the sisters in the lonely parsonage and their remarkable literary development. Augustine Birrell has written a good short life of Charlotte, while A. M. F. Robinson (Mme. Duclaux) has a volume on Emily Brontë in the Famous Women series.

T. Wemyss Reid was the first writer to make original research among the Brontë material and his book, *Charlotte Brontë—A Monograph*, paved the way for the exhaustive study of this strange family of genius by Clement Shorter. Other books that give much original material are *The Brontës in Ireland*, by Rev. Dr. William Wright, and *Charlotte Brontë and Her Sisters*, by Clement Shorter. Mr. Shorter also in *The Brontës—Life and Letters* gives all of Charlotte's letters in the order of their dates.

GEORGE ELIOT

The first collected edition of George Eliot's works was brought out in 1878-1880 in London and Edinburgh. Many editions have since appeared in England and in this country, the best one being the English Cabinet edition, published by A. & C. Black.

The standard life of George Eliot is *George Eliot's Life as Related in Her Letters and Journals*, edited by her husband, J. W. Cross, who served for ten years as curate of Haworth. Leslie Stephen has written a remarkably good short life of George Eliot in the English Men of Letters series.

Among critical articles on George Eliot may be mentioned Henry James in *Partial Portraits;* Mathilde Blind, *George Eliot;* Oscar Browning, *Life of George Eliot* in Great Writers series; Dowden, *Studies in Literature;* Oscar Browning, *Great Writers;* Mayo W.

Hazeltine, *Chats About Books;* R. H. Hutton, *Modern Guides of Religious Thought;* R. E. Cleveland, *George Eliot's Poetry;* Frederic Harrison, *The Choice of Books* and Sydney Lanier, *The Development of the English Novel.*

RUSKIN

The great edition of Ruskin is the Library edition by E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn, begun in 1903. It is splendidly illustrated and is a superb specimen of book-making. English and American editors of Ruskin are numerous.

The standard life of Ruskin is by W. G. Collingwood, his secretary and ardent disciple. One of his pupils, E. T. Cook, published *Studies in Ruskin,* which throws much light on his methods of teaching art. J. A. Hobson in *John Ruskin, Social Reformer* discusses his economic and social teaching. Dr. Charles Waldstein of Cambridge in *The Work of John Ruskin* develops his art theories. Good critical studies may also be found in W. M. Rossetti's *Ruskin* and Frederic Harrison's *Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill and Other Literary Estimates;* Justin McCarthy, *Modern Leaders;* Mary R. Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life* and R. H. Hutton, *Contemporary Thought and Thinkers.*

Among magazine articles may be noted W. J. Stillman in the CENTURY, volume 13; Charles Waldstein in HARPER'S, volume 18; Justin McCarthy in the GALAXY, volume 13, and Leslie Stephen in FRAZER'S, volumes 9 and 49.

TENNYSON

The best edition of Tennyson is the Eversley in six volumes, published by the Macmillans and edited by his son Hallam, which contains a mass of notes left by

the poet and many explanations of peculiar words and metaphors which the father gave to the son in discussing his work. This edition also gives the changes made by the poet in his constant revision of his works, some of which were not improvements.

A mass of critical commentary and reminiscence has been published on Tennyson and his poetical work. Among the best of these volumes are *Tennyson, Ruskin and Mill,* by Frederic Harrison; *Tennyson and His Friends,* by Mrs. Richmond Ritchie; *The Homes and Haunts of Tennyson,* by Napier; *Tennyson, His Art and Relation to Modern Life,* by Stopford A. Brooke; *The Poetry of Tennyson,* by Henry Van Dyke; the chapter on Tennyson in Stedman's *Victorian Poets;* a commentary on Tennyson's *In Memoriam* by Prof. A. C. Bradley; *Alfred Tennyson,* by Andrew Lang; *Views and Reviews,* by W. E. Henley; *Yesterdays With Authors,* by J. T. Fields; *The Victorian Age,* by Mrs. Oliphant. Dr. Henry Van Dyke contributed five articles on Tennyson to SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE, volume 6.

BROWNING

An enormous literature of comment, appreciation and interpretation has grown up around Browning, largely due to the work of various Browning societies in this country and in Europe. The London Browning Society especially has brought out many papers that will be of interest to Browning students. Other works are Arthur Symons, *Introduction to the Study of Browning* (London, 1886); G. W. Cooke, *Browning Guide Book* (New York, 1901); Fotheringham, *Studies* (London, 1898); Stedman, *Victorian Poets;* Prof. Hiram Corson, *Introduction to Browning;* George E. Woodberry, *Studies in Literature and Life;* Hamilton W. Mabie,

Essays in Literary Interpretation; A. Birrell, *Obiter Dicta;* George Saintsbury, *Corrected Impressions.*

The first edition of Browning's poems appeared in two volumes in 1849, a second in three volumes in 1863 and a third in six volumes in 1868. A revised edition containing all the poems was issued in sixteen volumes in 1888-1889. A fine complete edition in two volumes, edited by Augustine Birrell and F. G. Kenyon, was issued in 1896, and Smith, Elder & Co., London, brought out a two-volume edition in 1900. In this country the Riverside edition of *Browning's Poetical Works* in six volumes, issued by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., and the Camberwell edition in twelve handy volumes, with notes by Charlotte Porter and Helen A. Clarke, published by Crowell, are valuable for Browning students.

The standard life is *The Life and Letters of Robert Browning,* by Mrs. Sutherland Orr, but valuable are *The Love Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning,* issued by Browning's son in 1899. For Edmund Gosse's *Robert Browning—Personalia* the poet supplied much of the material in notes. Good short sketches and estimates are Chesterton's *Browning* in the English Men of Letters series and Waugh's *Robert Browning.*

GEORGE MEREDITH

The standard edition of Meredith's works is the Boxhill edition in seventeen volumes, with photogravure frontispieces, issued in this country by the Scribners. The same text is used in the Pocket Edition in sixteen volumes, which does not include the unfinished novel, *Celt and Saxon.* A mass of comment on Meredith may be found in the English and American reviews and magazines, to which Poole's *Index* furnishes the best guide.

Mrs. M. S. Henderson, *George Meredith: Novelist, Poet, Reformer;* George Macaulay Trevelyan, *The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith;* John Lane, *Biography of George Meredith,* and R. Le Gallienne, *Characteristics of George Meredith.*

STEVENSON

Robert Louis Stevenson's early work appeared in fugitive form in magazines and reviews and even after he had written *The New Arabian Nights* and *Travels With a Donkey* he was forced to see such excellent matter as *The Silverado Squatters* cut up into magazine articles and more than half of it discarded. The vogue of Stevenson was greater in this country than in England until he had fully established his reputation. In 1878 *An Inland Voyage* appeared and in 1879 *Travels With a Donkey,* but it was not until 1883 that *Treasure Island* made him well known. The standard edition of Stevenson is the Thistle edition, beautifully printed and illustrated, and issued at Edinburgh and New York, 1894-1898. *The Letters of Stevenson to His Family,* originally issued in 1899, have now been incorporated with *Vailima Letters* and issued in four volumes. They are arranged chronologically, with admirable biographical commentary by Sydney Colvin, to whom a great part of them was written. Stevenson's personality was so attractive that a mass of reminiscence and comment has been produced since his death in 1894. The best books are Graham Balfour, *Life of Robert Louis Stevenson;* Walter Raleigh, *R. L. Stevenson;* Simpson, *Stevenson's Edinburgh Days,* and *Memoirs of Vailima,* by Isobel Strong and Lloyd Osbourne, the novelist's stepchildren. Henry James in *Partial Portraits* has a fine appreciation of Stevenson and *Robert Louis Stevenson in California,* by Katharine D. Osbourne is rich in reminiscence.

THOMAS HARDY

Since 1895, Thomas Hardy has written no fiction. The standard edition of his works is published in this country by the Harpers. Recently this firm has issued Hardy in a convenient thin paper edition which may be slipped into the coat pocket. His first novel, *Desperate Remedies*, appeared in 1871 but it was not until the issue of *Far From the Madding Crowd* in 1874 that he gained popular fame. Many magazine articles have been written on the "corner of Dorsetshire" which Hardy calls Wessex. Good books on the Hardy country are *The Wessex of Romance*, by W. Sherren, and *The Wessex of Thomas Hardy*, by Windle.

KIPLING

The standard edition of Kipling is the Outward Bound edition, published in this country by the Scribners. It contains a general introduction by the author and special prefaces to each volume, with illustrations from bas reliefs made by the novelist's father. Doubleday, Page & Co. are issuing a pocket edition of Kipling, on thin paper with flexible leather binding, which is very convenient. Any additional books will be added to each of these editions. Kipling has told of his early life in India and of his precocious literary activity in *My First Book* (1894). Richard Le Gallienne made a study of the novelist in *Rudyard Kipling—A Criticism* and Edmund Gosse in *Questions at Issue* discusses his short stories. Prof. William Lyon Phelps in *Essays on Modern Novelists* has a fine chapter on Kipling. Andrew Lang in *Essays in Little* treats of "Mr. Kipling's Stories" and Barrie has an appreciation in CONTEMPORARY REVIEW for March, 1891. A useful *Kipling Index* is issued by Doubleday, Page & Co. All titles are indexed so that one may locate any story or character.

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Here Ends Modern English Books of Power, Being a Second Series of Essays on Great Books and Their Writers by George Hamlin Fitch. Published by Paul Elder & Company at Their Tomoye Press in the City of San Francisco and Seen Through the Press by John Bernhardt Swart in the Month of February and the Year Nineteen Hundred and Twelve